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THE ORCHARD BOOKS

XVII: *Minor Works of Walter Hilton*

MINOR WORKS OF WALTER HILTON

Edited by

DOROTHY JONES

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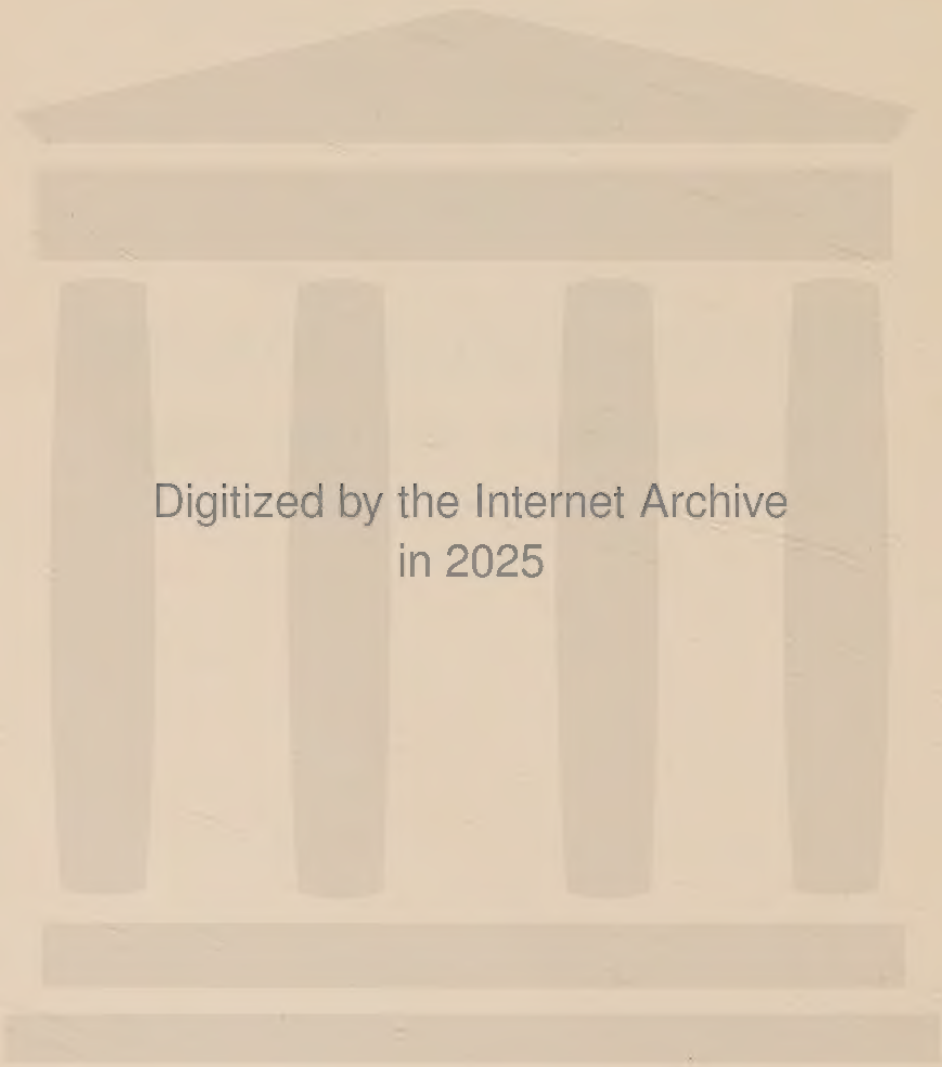
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FOREWORD

WHEN Miss Dorothy Jones asked me to write a preface to her edition of the *Minor Works* of Walter Hilton, a little book at the British Museum was occupying my attention, the work of Margaret Roper. It was a translation into English of a treatise by her father's friend and her own, Erasmus, on the *Paternoster*. I was interested then rather in the preface to the little work than in the translation, and it seemed to me to be a pretty coincidence that at that moment I should myself be asked to write an introduction to a work that reminded me in many ways of the More circle. Margaret Roper's preface was written by a young scholar named Richard Hyrde, and addressed to Margaret's cousin, Frances, a favourite pupil of the young tutor. It is an important little document, an early defence of the education of women, not wanting in the salt of wit and grace of humour that distinguished the household of Sir Thomas More.

We know that this household was a school of sacred and humane learning in which the women-folk won distinction. Such a phenomenon was then virtually unique; and

it won Erasmus over to More's more liberal views. To-day we are reaping the fruits of the enlightenment of earlier times. Our universities are crowded with women. But with all our apparent progress the essential loyalties remain fixed; and I see no real difference in kind and intention between Margaret Roper's determination to make known and publish Erasmus' *Treatise on the Paternoster* and Miss Dorothy Jones's desire to secure readers for Walter Hilton's *Minor Works*.

We learn from her valuable Introduction that several of the most important MSS. of the writings attributed to Hilton have come down to us in transcripts made in the time of Sir Thomas More by Carthusian monks, whether of the Charterhouse of London or of Shene. The Douce MS. of *The Cloud of Unknowing* was the work of William Tregoose, a London Carthusian, who died in 1514; the Harleian MS. of the same work is also described as belonging to the Charterhouse of London; the Parkminster MS. was written by the Carthusian martyr, William Exmewe, and bears the name of his younger contemporary in the community, Maurice Chauncey; whilst John Greenhalgh of the Charterhouse of Shene, a contemporary of Tregoose, transcribed *The Scale of Perfection*. To those who are

interested in the English works of Sir Thomas More this is a matter of no little importance. No one who has read, for instance, his *Treatise of the Four Last Things*—"Death, Doom, Pain, and Joy"—and is familiar with our earlier prose writers, can fail to observe that More's prose style is like nothing that preceded it so much as the natural, lucid, and easy prose of the school of Hilton. Nor is this surprising if we remember that More spent three or four years of his early manhood in the Charterhouse of London, where, and apparently when, Hilton's works were being copied. May we not say with some assurance that he knew, and knew well, the writings of Walter Hilton, and look with interest for the marks of their influence on his own direct and intimate prose? We know that throughout his life he continued to practise the austerities and self-discipline that he had known among the Carthusians. It may seem incongruous to associate More's hair-shirt with his prose style; but both, I believe, derived from his early days of prayer, reading, recollection, and discipline beside the monks of the London Charterhouse.

I have referred to Miss Jones's valuable Introduction. It abounds in points of great interest for bibliographers and scholars. Manuscripts are too often impersonal and

material things. Miss Jones introduces us to their writers and first owners. The Killums and Collops about whom she has much to tell us are real people, worth knowing. They are not merely former owners of this or that MS., but typical pre-Reformation Englishmen, who disposed of no small part of their goods " for a common profit." Not less valuable than the Introduction are the notes. These could only have been compiled by one who had lived with her text so intimately that it had become part of herself. In no other way could she have gathered so great a number of parallel and illustrative passages, or traced so many of the ideas of Hilton to his sources. If the vexed question of the authorship of *The Cloud of Unknowing* is ever settled it will be, I think, by someone with Miss Jones's minute acquaintance with the whole body of writings to which it belongs.

A. W. REED.

KING'S COLLEGE,
LONDON.

INTRODUCTION

THE five short treatises included in this volume are edited from *Lambeth MS.* 472, in which they are preceded by the two books of Walter Hilton's *Scale of Perfection.* The manuscript is clearly written on vellum and has been ascribed to the early fifteenth century; the following colophons occur at the end:

1. This booke was maad of þe goodis of Jon Killum for a comyne p*ro*fite/ That þat p*er*soone þat hab þis booke committed to him of þe p*er*soone þat hab power to co*m*mitte it: haue þe vse þ*er*of þe teerme of his lyf: pra'yng for þe soule of þe same ion/ And þat he þat hab þe forseid vse of co*m*missioun whanne he occupieb it not: leene it for a tyme to sum oþ*er* p*er*soone/ Also þat p*er*soone to whom it was committid for þe teerme of lyf: vndir þe forseid condicioun*s* delyu*er*e it to a noþ*er* p*er*soone þe teerme of his lyf/ And so be it delyuerid and committid fro p*er*soone to p*er*soone man or womma*n* as longe as þe booke endurib/

2. Memoran*dum* þat þis boke be deliu*er*ed to Richard Colop Parchemanere of London after my discesse. And in caas he die or I: þen I wol it be take to som deuowte p*er*sone to haue it vnder þe forme and condicion wretyn in þe ende of þis book heere to fore.

3. Per me dom*inum* Ioh*ann*em Graunt
In no*min*e d*omi*ni nostri I*es*u Ch*risti*:
God graunt grace o*mni*b*us* nobis

1493

4. God graunt grace o*mni*b*us* nobis
In no*min*e d*omi*ni nostri I*es*u Ch*risti*
Dum sumus* in mundo†

The editor is indebted to Mr. J. P. Gilson, Keeper of the Manuscripts at the British Museum, for drawing her attention to the will, extant in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (33 Marche), of one John Killum, grocer, who died in 1416. This will is drawn up in Latin and contains many legacies. The testator appears to have lived in the parish of St Stephen, Walbrook; but he wishes to be buried in the Church of the Holy Trinity within Aldgate, should he die in London. He mentions neither wife nor child. Most of his legatees are resident in the eastern counties, and he leaves twenty pounds for mending the bad road between Coggeshall in Essex and Cross in Hand near Colchester (I*te*m lego pro nociua via inter Goggesale in Essex *et* Crucem in manu versus Colchestr*em* emendand*a* p*er* discre-c*ion*em executor*um* meor*um* xx li*bras*), a hundred shillings for mending the bad roads between Hadley and Ipswich (It*e*m lego ad

* MS. reads " somnus."
† MS. reads " mondo."

nociuas vias emendand*as* inter Hadley et ypposwyth c. sol*idarios*), and legacies to the prisoners of Bury, Colchester, and Norwich. The most important point for the purpose of identifying the owner of *Lambeth MS.* 472 with John Killum, grocer, is that Killum left to John Colop, his servant, who was also one of the executors of the will, the task of distributing the residue of his property in alms. It is possible (although of this there is no proof) that the Richard Colop mentioned in the second colophon of *Lambeth MS.* 472 was the son of this John Colop. The other executors of the will were William Michell, John Sudbury, and Thomas Page; and Robert Chicheley was appointed their overseer. William Michell, John Sudbury, and Robert Chicheley were all members of the Grocers' Company; while the last-named was an Alderman and, in 1412, Mayor of London, and brother of Henry Chicheley, Archbishop of Canterbury. The name of John Killum occurs several times in the Records of the Grocers' Company, 1345-1428, and it appears also in Hustings Roll 132, dated 1404, in connection with some tenements in Westchepe, parish of St Mary Colechurch. In Hustings Roll 171, dated 1442, Richard Kelom, son of John Kelom brother of Martin Kelom, late mercer (Ric*ard*us Kelom filius Ioh*ann*is Kelom defuncti f*rat*ris Martini

Kelom nup*er* ciuis *et* merceri london), appears in connection with quit claims of a tenement called "le Hode," in the parish of All Hallows at the Hay and also in the parish of St Mary Magdalen, Old Fish Street. As has been stated above, John Kelom, grocer, makes no mention of a son in his will; otherwise there is no reason why he should not have been the father of Richard Kelom.

The will of Martin Kelom, mercer, is extant in the Commissary Court of London (290 More); it is drawn up in Latin and is even longer than that of John Kelom. From it we learn that the name of his first wife was Johanna, and that he had a son, James, and a daughter, Johanna. Probably these were the children of his first wife. His second wife, Margaret, whose will is also extant in the Commissary Court of London (395 More), was the widow of John Covyn of the parish of St Sepulchre, who died in 1407, leaving a son, William, and a daughter, Johanna. Both Martin Kelom and his two wives were buried in the Church of St Mary Aldermanbury. Martin Kelom was evidently a collector of books; he leaves grammar books, precepts of philosophy and theology, and all his English books to his son, James; to his daughter, Johanna, he leaves Primers containing the Matins of the Blessed Virgin, and he also leaves a book to

Johanna Covyn (Item lego Iacobo filio meo om*n*es libros meos g*ra*maticales pre-s*cript*us philosophie et theologie exceptis primariis continen*tibus* matutinas de virgine gloriosa s*ancta* maria quorum p*ri*mariorum lego optimum *et* debilissimum Ioh*a*nne filie mee. Item lego Iohanne Couy illum librum quem dedi sibi in vita mea). He mentions a brother, Thomas; and he leaves legacies to kinsmen, Thomas Whalley and William Hawholme, and money to be distributed amongst his poor relations in Lincolnshire (Item lego xl p*er*sonis de p*ar*entela mea magis indigentibus in Com*itatu* lincoln eligendis per Thomam Whalley p*redictu*m sī tante in p*ar*entela mea inu*en*eri potuerint). Mention is also made in the will of the places Caistor, Cailesthorp (Caythorpe), and Wykham. These references to Lincolnshire are interesting for the purposes of this Introduction, because Lincolnshire adjoins Nottinghamshire, the county in which was situated the monastery of Thurgarton where Hilton lived; and especially because it is at least possible that the Kelom family had come from Kelham near Newark-on-Trent, a place only a few miles across country from Thurgarton. The Hustings Rolls contain references to the Kelom family as late as 1513.

The will of Richard Colop, Parchmanere

of London, whose name occurs in the second colophon of *Lambeth MS.* 472, is extant in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (23 Wattys). He leaves "my body to be buried in the chirche of saint clement of the danes *with*oute the barres of the newe Temple of london where I am p*ar*risshen*er*," and legacies to the church work of "saint clement of the danes," "saint Mary att Stronde," and "saint martyns in the ffeeld." The residue of his property is left to Clemence his wife, the sole executrix of the will, to be shared by her with his children. William Lyndesey, baker, is appointed overseer. In Hustings Roll 202, dated 1472, the name of Richard Colop, stationer, appears, together with the names of William Lynsey, baker, and Agnes his wife, in connection with the quit claim of a tenement called "le Hertes-horn," in the parish of St Sepulchre-without-Newgate. This Richard Colop was evidently the same as Richard Colop, parchment-maker.

Professor C. Horstman gives a list of the manuscripts in which *Mixed Life*, the first and longest of the treatises here printed, is known to be extant;* to this list must be added *Lambeth MS.* 472 and *British Museum Harleian MS.* 2397. As Horstman points

* *Richard Rolle of Hampole and his Followers* (1895), vol. i, pp. 264-5.

out, ch. i and the last paragraph of ch. xxxi of the present edition are not found in the earlier MSS.—*i.e.*, the *Bodleian Vernon MS.* and *British Museum Additional MS.* 22283 (the *Simeon MS.*)—nor are they included in *Bodleian Rawlinson MS.* A 355.* The last paragraph of ch. xxxi is omitted also from *British Museum Harleian MS.* 2254 and from the *Lincoln Cathedral Thornton MS.* This omission and certain textual similarities place *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2254 and the *Linc. Cath. Thornton MS.* in the same category as the older MSS., although both MSS. are defective at the beginning. From the text of ch. ii it appears that *Mixed Life* was originally in the form of a personal epistle, possibly addressed to someone under the author's direction. Horstman is of the opinion that the introductory ch. i was added later in order to give the treatise a wider scope.† In the printed editions of Notary (1507), of Pynson (1517), and of de Worde (1519, 1525, and 1533) an attempt was made to rectify the discrepancy between ch. i and ch. ii by the substitution at the beginning of ch. i of the singular form of address "Dear brother in Christ" for the plural form of address found in the MSS. The earlier and later MS. versions of *Mixed Life*

* *Op. cit.*, vol. i, pp. 267-8.
† *Op. cit.*, vol. i, p. 269.

are analogous to those of Book I of *The Scale of Perfection*, referred to by Miss Underhill in her Introduction to the latter work.* The earlier form of Book I of *The Scale of Perfection* also occurs in the *Vernon* and *Simeon MSS.*

The MSS. used in preparing the present edition of *Mixed Life* are as follows:

I.—MSS. with the treatise in its earlier form:

Bodleian Vernon MS. (*c.* 1380-1400). For this MS. Horstman's edition (*op. cit.*) has been used.

B. M. Add. MS. 22283 (late xivth century). This MS. formerly belonged to Sir John Simeon, 3rd Bart.

B. M. Harl. MS. 2254 (xvth century). This MS. contains the following notes as to ownership:

1. Thys boyk longyth to D*omin*a alys braintworth & the worchypful pr*i*oras of Dartforde.
2. Orate p*ro* a*nim*a d*omin*ae Elizabith Rede huius loci.
3. Orate p*ro* a*nim*a Joh*ann*e Newmarche.

Mixed Life is preceded in this MS. by an English translation of St Bonaventure's *Stimulus Amoris* with the following colophon which is erroneously repeated at the end of *Mixed Life*:

* *The Scale of Perfection* (ed. E. Underhill), Introduction, p. xliv.

Here endeth the tretis that is kallid. prickynge of loue made bi a frere menour. bonauenture: that was cardynal of the courte of Rome.

Lincoln Cathedral Thornton MS. (1430-40). For this MS. the Early English Text Society's edition has been used. The editor has to thank the Rev. Prebendary Kynaston, Assistant Librarian of Lincoln Cathedral, for verifying the date of Robert Thornton's MS., which has been given sometimes as 1340 and sometimes as 1440. Mr. Kynaston points out that there is conflicting evidence even as to the latter date.

The editor has examined *Bodleian Rawlinson MS.* A 355.1 (xvth century), but has not compared it with the other MSS. It has the following title:

Tractatus qui dicitur Media Vita, editus a domino Waltero [Hilton], canonico de Thurkerton.

II.—MSS. with the treatise in its later form:

Lambeth MS. 472 (early xvth century).

B. M. Harl. MS. 2397 (xvth century).

In this MS. *Mixed Life* is preceded by Book II of *The Scale of Perfection*, under the title "The Reforming of Man's Soul," and by the following ascription:

This tretis þat sewiþ was maad by maister watir hiltone. & hereinne is tauȝt hou men schuld rule hem. & it is clepid medlid lyf.

It is followed by *Bonum Est* and at the end of the MS. is the following colophon:

Dame Elyzabeth Horwode Abbas of the Menoresse off london to her gostle comfforthe bouȝte thys boke. hyt to remayne to the vse off the systerrs of the sayde place to pray for the yeuer & ffor the sowles off hyr ffad*er* & here moder Tho*ma*s Horwode & beatryxe and the sowle of Maist*er* Roberte Alderton.

Dame Elizabeth Horwood lived during the reign of Edward IV.*

B. M. Royal MS. 17 C xviii (xvth century). This MS. formerly belonged to John Theyer, and bears the sixteenth century names of Thoorlay, Wylliam Horlow, Clement Harrison.

The editor has examined *Bodleian MSS. Rawlinson* A 356.2 (xvth century) and C 894.4 (xvth century), but has not compared them with the other MSS. *Rawlinson MS.* A 356.2 has the following title:

Here begynneth a tretyse whyche tretiþ of actyff lyff, and of contemplatyfl lyffe, and of a medelyd lyff.

Mixed Life has been printed as follows:

(*a*) By Wynkyn de Worde, with *The Scale of Perfection, c.* 1494, and in 1519, 1525, and 1533.

Mr. E. Gordon Duff describes de Worde's 1494 edition of *The Scale of Perfection* as containing a third book which is missing

* See *The Order of Minoresses in England*, by A. F. C. Bourdillon (vol. xii, British Society of Franciscan Studies), Appendix I, p. 87.

from almost all copies, and his description of this third book led the editor to believe that it was actually *Mixed Life*.* She is indebted to Lord Aldenham for his kindness in permitting her to examine his copy of the edition, which contains the rare third book, the first printed edition of *Mixed Life*. This edition differs considerably, not only from the editions of Notary and of Pynson, but also from de Worde's editions of 1519, 1525, and 1533. The date of *The Scale of Perfection* on folio 135*a* reads—

Finit feliciter liber intitulatus Scala perfeccionis impressus Anno Salutis Mccccl xxxxiiii,

and is followed by de Worde's device. Folio 135*b* was originally blank, but in Lord Aldenham's copy it has been used for common places. *Mixed Life* begins on folio 136*a*. The title reads:

Here begynneth the table of the thyrde booke of Water hylton named Vita mixta or scala perfeccionis.

The table of chapters corresponds to that of the *Vernon MS*. It ends with the words:

Explicit Tabule tercie partis;

* *Illustrated Monograph on Fifteenth Century English Books* (Bibliographical Society, 1917), p. 53, No. 203.

and on folio 137*a* follow the words:

> Here foloweth the thyrde boke of mayster Walter hylton called Vita mixta or scala perfeccionis,

and

> Here begynneth a prologue of a lytyl boke that was wryten to a seculer or temporall worldly lord to teche hym how he sholde haue in his astate ordynate loue to god and charyte to his euen crysten.

The Prologue coincides with the beginnings of the *Vernon* and *Simeon MSS.* and ends with the words:

> And thus endeth the prologue of this lytyll boke called Vita mixta or scala perfeccionis.

The chapters coincide with those of the *Vernon MS.* and *B. M. Add. MS.* 22283; but the last paragraph of ch. xxxi of the present text, which is omitted from the *Vernon MS.* and also from *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2254 and from the *Thornton MS.*, is included in this edition. Moreover, the faulty reading caused by the omission of the words "and lettest them" in *Lambeth MS.* 472, *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397, and *B. M. Royal MS.* 17 Ch. xviii occurs also in this edition.* It appears, therefore, that for this edition of *Mixed Life* de Worde used both the earlier and the later

* *Cf. Mixed Life*, p. 28, footnote *, below.

manuscript versions. The book ends with the words:

> Here endeth the thyrde boke of mayster Walter hylton called Vita mixta or scala perfeccionis.

The text covers fourteen folios, and as they follow the folio containing de Worde's device and the date of printing of the *Scala Perfectionis*, it is probable that *Mixed Life* was originally printed as a separate pamphlet, which may have been bound up with certain copies only of the *Scala Perfectionis*; this would account for the inclusion of *Mixed Life* in so few of the extant copies of the 1494 *Scala Perfectionis*.

It should be noted, moreover, that Wynkyn de Worde himself has assigned no date to this edition of *Mixed Life*; but there are several points, in connection both with the typography of the work itself and with Lord Aldenham's copy, that support the theory that *Mixed Life* was first printed at the same time as the 1494 *Scala Perfectionis*.

In the title, *Mixed Life* is described as "the thyrde booke of Water hylton named Vita mixta or scala perfeccionis."

The measurement of a similar number of lines in the two books works out at approximately the same. For example, thirty-three lines measure 7·3 inches. The woodcut of the decorated initial letter G, which occurs

at the beginning of both ch. i, Book I, of *The Scale of Perfection* and the Prologue to *Mixed Life*, is the same in both cases and measures about an inch square. So far as it is possible for an amateur to judge, the same type appears to have been used, although in *The Scale of Perfection* the capital letters are more varied than in *Mixed Life*. For instance, in *The Scale of Perfection* at least two different founts have been used for B, whereas in *Mixed Life* only one of these founts has been used.

Lord Aldenham's copy is in its original binding, and is annotated throughout by one John Grenehalgh, who has written on the inside of the front cover:

> Liber Cartus*ie* Schene Ie*s*u Bethle*me*
> Grenehalgh Monke Profess*us*

and the words:

> This boke is diligently corrected oute of Laten

On the inside of the back cover appears the following statement:

> Magister Walterus Hylton Canonicus de thurgarton qui fuit vir venerabilis scientia et sanctitate vitae composuit hunc libru*m* tripartitu*m* et multa alia de quibus duas dumtaxat hactenus uidi epi*stulas* plenas catholica fide et edificatione maxime ad Relligiosos C*uiusde*m ffoelicissim*us* obitus fuit Apud Thurgarton p*redictu*m in borea Vigilia viz. Assumptio*nis* b*eate* Mariae Anno nostrae Saluationis. 1395. m.ccc.lxxxxv. Monogram of J. G. Cartus*ianus* Eiusde*m* partis oriund*us* Schen*e*. profess*us*.

The wording of the early part of this statement is very similar to that of the statement on the fly-leaf of *B. M. Harl. MS.* 6579, which reads as follows:

> Magister Walterus Hylton Canonicus de Thurgarton, qui fuit homo venerabilis sciencia et vite sanctitate, composuit hunc librum plenum catholica doctrina et edificacione.

B. M. Harl. MS. 6579 was the property of the London Charterhouse,* and is the manuscript on which Miss Underhill has based her edition of *The Scale of Perfection.*

Mr. M. R. James, in his book on *The Western MSS. in the Library of Trinity College, Cambridge,* describes *MS.* B. 15, 18. 374 (*Scala Perfectionis*) as follows:

> The original hand breaks off with f. 114: the remainder (sixteen lines) is added by a late xvth century hand and has this colophon:
>
> > et sic finitur liber ven. Walteri Hylton summi contemplatiui cuius ffoelicissimus obitus fuit in vigilia Intemerate (so) Assumptionis Intemerate Virginis dei genetricis Marie a.d. M.CCC.lxxxxv. Script. quidem est hoc opus per Benet quondam procuratorem in Carthusia de Schen super Tamisiam Quod Grenehalgh eiusdem domus professus indigna manu sua In ffesto Reliquiarum fc. 6ª sero. 1499. Monogram of J. G. follows.

This colophon informs us that Grenehalgh was living in 1499.

* *The Scale of Perfection* (ed. E. Underhill), Introduction, p. xlvi.

Lord Aldenham's volume also contains the following note at the end of the table of chapters of Book I of *The Scale of Perfection*:

This boke belongith to Dame Jhone Sewelle, Systere in Syon Professed The yere of oure Saluation a thousand and ffyue hundreth.

This is followed by her monogram, combined with that of John Grenehalgh, and the words:

In die Sancti Vitalis Martiris xxviii Ap*rilis*.

In 1558 the volume belonged to one Robert Hare.

Dom Ephrem Guy refers to a copy of the 1519 edition that belonged to the late Dr. Ullathorne, the Catholic Bishop of Birmingham.* This copy was presented by Dr. Ullathorne to the library of Oscott College, and the editor has to thank the Right Rev. Monsignor Cronin, Rector of Oscott College, for permitting her to examine the volume. The title reads as follows:

This is a deuout boke co*m*pyled by master Walter hylton to a deuout man in te*m*poral estate howe he shulde rule hym.

The text is followed by the words

Explicit vita mixta.

Infynyte laude with thankynges manyfolde
I yelde to god me socourynge with his grace
This boke to fynysshe which that ye beholde
Scale of perfeccyon calde in euery place
Wherof thauctor Walter Hylton was.

* *The Scale of Perfection* (ed. Dom E. Guy), 1869, Introduction, p. xxxix.

Then comes the colophon—

> Imprynted at London in Flete strete by Wynkyn de Worde dwellynge at the sygne of the sonne/ and fynysshed in the yere of our lorde god. M.CCCCC. &. xix. The. iii. day of Janyuer.

—and de Worde's device, followed by a decoration. The volume is bound in pigskin, and on the back cover are written the words:

Walter Hylton
Carthusii Fryer

Folio A i, containing the beginning of *The Scale of Perfection*, is missing; but the book is otherwise in good condition.

The volume is important, as it appears to be the only known extant copy of de Worde's edition of *The Scale of Perfection* and *Mixed Life* published in 1519. The date, January 3, 1519, makes it highly probable that this was the first book issued from de Worde's press in 1519. A curious typographical detail occurs on folios B iii v° and B iiii of *The Scale of Perfection*. Contrary to custom, ch. xiv ends half-way down folio B iii v°, and the rest of the page is left blank. On folio B iiii the heading of ch. xv is followed by three ornamental lines, while the actual text of the chapter begins half-way down the page.

In the editions of 1525 and 1533 the titles and endings are identical, apart from slight differences in orthography and in punctuation, with those of 1519. De Worde's device precedes the colophons, which are the same, except for the dates, which read:

(1525)

and fynysshed in the yere of our lorde god M.CCCCC.xxv. The last daye of Marche

(and 1533)

and fynysshed in the yere of our lorde god M.CCCCC.xxxiii. The xxvii daye of Maye.

Reference to the notes to the present edition of *Mixed Life* will show that the texts of de Worde's editions of 1519, 1525, and 1533 follow the text of Notary's edition of 1507. It is probable, therefore, that de Worde used Notary's text for these editions. Possibly the edition of 1507 was one of the books for which Notary received a commission from de Worde.

(*b*) By Julian Notary, with *The Scale of Perfection* in 1507, with the following title:

This is a deuout boke co*m*pyled by mayster Walter hylton to a deuout man in temperal estate how he sholde rule*n* hym/

(*c*) By Richard Pynson, with *The Kalendre of the Newe Legende of England* and *The*

Lyfe of St Bridget, in 1517. The colophon at the end of this edition reads as follows:

Thus endyth a deuoute boke co*m*pyled by mayster water Hylton/ Emprynted at lo*n*don in flete strete at the signe of the George by (Rycharde Pynson) prynter vnto þe kynges noble grace. in the yere of our Lorde god a.M.CCCCC & vi. & endyd in the laste daye of February.

The date given in the colophon as 1506 is erroneous, for Pynson's device is in its third state, when the lower border had broken away entirely, and this did not happen until 1513.* Moreover, *The Lyfe of St Bridget* which precedes *Mixed Life* has the following colophon:

Thus endyth the Lyfe of Seynt Byrgette Enprynted at Lo*n*don in Flete strete at the sygne of the George by Rycharde Pynson prynter vnto the kynges noble grace the .xx. daye of February/ In yere of of oure Lorde god a.M.CCCCC. and xvi;

Further, the colophon to *The Kalendre of the Newe Legende of England* reads:

Thus endyth the Kalendre of the new Legende of Englande/ Emprynted to the honour of the gloriouse Seynt*es* therin conteyned by Richarde Pynson/ prynter to our Soueraygne lorde Kynge Henry the viii.

and Henry VIII did not accede to the throne until 1509. Pynson, in his Prologue to the

* H. R. Plomer, *English Printing*, 1476-1898, ch. ii, pp. 41-42.

volume, after referring to the two preceding works, writes:

> In þe latter ende of this boke is a lytell draught of Mayster water Hylton of the medled lyfe shewynge howe and by whome it shulde be vsed & though it haue ben Imprynted before this tyme yet take it charytably/ for þe more a good thynge is knowen the better it is and parcase by this occasyon it may come to the knowlege of some men that otherwyse shulde neuer haue harde speke of it. Explicit Prologus.

Mr. H. R. Plomer is of the opinion that Pynson began his year on March 25;* in which case the date February, 1516, would be actually February, 1516-17 (or 1517). The same writer expresses the opinion that the 1516 edition of *Medled Life* was a reprint of Pynson's previous edition of 1505.† Possibly, therefore, Pynson had included *Medled Life* with his edition of *The Scale of Perfection* mentioned by Dom Ephrem Guy as having been printed in 1506.‡ Were it not for the spacing of the date in the colophon to *Medled Life*, it would seem that the type for the symbol "&" had been accidentally used for the type "x," as these are not unlike.

* *Wynkyn de Worde and his Contemporaries* (Bibliographical Society, 1925), p. 132.

† *Op. cit.*, p. 142.

‡ *The Scale of Perfection* (ed. Dom E. Guy), Introduction, p. xxxix.

(*d*) By Robert Wyer, *c.* 1531. Mr. Plomer mentions this edition also,* and in his paper on *Robert Wyer, Printer and Bookseller*, published by the Bibliographical Society in 1897, he refers to the copy in the Bodleian Library.† This is probably a reprint of Pynson's edition of 1516-17, as the chapter divisions of the two editions coincide. The title is as follows:

Here begynneth the Medled lyfe Compyled by mayster Water Hylton / to a deuoute man in temperall Estate / howe he shulde rule hym / whiche is right expedyent for euery man / and moste in especyall for them that lyue in the Medled lyfe / And it shewyth what Medled lyfe is;

and the colophon reads:

Thus endeth this lytell treatyse intytuled the Medled lyfe compyled by Walter Hylton / at the instaunce of a deuoute man of temporall estate. Imprynted by me Robert Wyre / dwellynge at the Sygne of saynt Johñ Euangelyst: in saynt Martyns parysshe / besyde Charygne crosse.

(*e*) With *The Scale of Perfection* in 1659. This edition is generally regarded as the work of Dom Serenus de Cressy, O.S.B. The text is based on de Worde's edition; but the language has been assimilated to that of the seventeenth century.

(*f*) Anthony à Wood, in his *Athenæ Oxonienses*, has the following passage referring to Abraham Woodhead:

* *Op. cit.*, p. 228. † p. 42.

Mr. Woodhead also changed the stile of a book called *The Scale* (or Ladder) *of Perfection*, written by *Walt. Hilton* a Carthusian in the time of K. *Hen.* 6. Which book having been printed an. 1494 he, I say, changed many antiquated words therein, and rendred them more intelligible for ordinary capacities. Lond. 1679 oct. He also changed the stile of another treatise of the same author, written to a devout man of secular estate, teaching him how to lead a spiritual life therein—Printed with *The Scale, etc.*

(*g*) By the Early English Text Society in *English Prose Treatises of Richard Rolle of Hampole*, edited in 1866 from Robert Thornton's MS. (Lincoln Cathedral Library) and from *Royal MS.* 17 C xviii, by the Rev. G. G. Perry, M.A.

(*h*) With *The Scale of Perfection*, edited in 1869 in modernised form by Dom Ephrem Guy, O.S.B.

(*i*) With the *Scale of Perfection*, edited in 1870 in modernised form, from the edition of 1659, by Father Dalgairns of the Oratory. This edition was reissued in 1908.

(*j*) Edited from the *Vernon* and *Thornton* MSS. and included in *Richard Rolle of Hampole and his Followers* by Professor C. Horstman in 1895.

The present edition is based on *Lambeth MS.* 472, and has been compared with the other MSS. mentioned above and with the printed editions of de Worde (1494, 1525 and 1533), of Notary (1507), and of Pynson (1516).

The second treatise, *Eight Chapters on Perfection*, is to be found in the following MSS.:

Lambeth MS. 472 (early xvth century), following *Mixed Life*.

B. M. Harl. MS. 993 (xvth century). This manuscript contains also a copy of *A Devout Treatise of Discerning of Spirits*, ascribed to the unknown author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*. At the end of the manuscript is a colophon similar to the first colophon of *Lambeth MS.* 472; but the name of Robert Holland appears where the name of John Killum appears in the latter MS. A Robert Holland, shearman, died intestate in 1441, and it is interesting to note that the administration of his goods was granted to one John Collopp of the parish of St Michael in the Royal (Commissary Court of London, 79 Prowet), whose name appears also in Hustings Rolls dated 1424 and 1430. This John Collopp was appointed to distribute alms for the executors of the famous Richard Whittington, and he may have been identical with the servant and executor of John Killum. The name of Robert Holland, shearman and barber, occurs also in Hustings Rolls dated 1410, 1413, 1419, 1420, 1424, 1425, 1426, 1428, 1429, 1430, 1433, and 1434. As John Killum did not die until 1416, it is probable that he

was acquainted with Robert Holland and that the latter had seen *Lambeth MS.* 472. A second colophon follows in a later hand, thus:

JAMES PALMER.

James palmer owneth this book, yet w*ith*out ye least intent to pray for the soule of Robert Holland, being a wicked and simple custome, of sottishly ignorant Papists.

J. PALMER, *Junior.*

The manuscript also bears the names of Anne Colvilee and Thomas Holland.

B. M. Royal MS. 17 C xviii (xvth century).

B. M. Add. MS. 10053 (xvth century). This MS. was purchased at Heber's sale. In 1779 it belonged to William Herbert.

Bodleian MS. Rawlinson C 894.4 (xvth century). This copy of the treatise is known as Hilton's *Divine Love* and is headed

Tractatus M. Wi. Hiltone.

Camb. Univ. MS. Hh. 1. 12. "A Manual of Private Devotion, divided into chapters, compiled from the Fathers, and the *Stimulus Amoris* of S Bonaventure; imperfect at the beginning and end, and thus without chapters 1, 35, 36, and parts of 2 and 34. The rubrick before chapter 15, fol. 80*b*, states that it consists of 'Diuerse chapitres of a treatise callyd the prikk of love [*stimulus amoris*] of S Bonaventure,

translated into English by maister waltir hilton chanon and gouernoure of þe house of Thurgarton biside Newark.' "* In the table of chapters given in the catalogue appear the two following chapter headings:

21. Of þe tokynnes and werchynges of love.
22. How goostly love is turnyd into flessely love.

It is probable, therefore, that this manuscript contains extracts from the *Eight Chapters on Perfection.*

The Carthusian monks at Parkminster have in their possession a late seventeenth-century copy of the *Eight Chapters on Perfection* "taken out of a Manuscript of Walter Hilton's Scala perfectionis at Lambeth,"† and the editor is indebted to the Very Rev. the Prior of St. Hugh's Charterhouse for permitting her to inspect this MS., which was purchased in 1895 at the sale of the library of Sir Thomas Philipps.

The present edition of the treatise is based on *Lambeth MS.* 472, and has been compared with *B. M. Harl. MS.* 993, *B. M. Royal MS.* 17 C xviii, and *B. M. Add. MS.* 10053.

The third treatise, *Qui Habitat,* is extant in the following MSS:

* Catalogue of MSS. in the University Library, Cambridge.

† See catalogue of the Library of Sir Thomas Philipps.

Lambeth MS. 472 (early xvth century), following *Eight Chapters on Perfection.*

Camb. Univ. MS. Hh. 1. 11, 7 (xvth century).

The present edition is based on *Lambeth MS.* 472.

The fourth treatise, *Bonum Est*, is included in the following MSS.:

Lambeth MS. 472 (early xvth century), following *Qui Habitat.*

B. M. Harl. MS. 2397 (xvth century), following *Mixed Life.*

Camb. Univ. MS. Hh. 1. 11, 7 (xvth century).

The present edition is based on *Lambeth MS.* 472, and has been compared with *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397.

For the fifth and last treatise, *Benedictus*, the only authority known to the editor is *Lambeth MS.* 472.

* * * * *

Although Mr. Perry included *Mixed Life* in the works of Richard Rolle, the authorship of this treatise has been generally ascribed to Walter Hilton, the author of *The Scale of Perfection.* Apart from the evidence of manuscripts and early printed books, the unity of thought and of style in the

two works leaves little room for doubt as to their common authorship. *Mixed Life* was written by Hilton to a man who aspired to a contemplative life. The name of this man is unknown to us, but the text shows that he was of high social position, having children, servants, and tenants dependent on him, and that he was probably a widower. Hilton describes the three states of life open to a Christian—viz., active life, contemplative life, and mixed life. Active life is for those who aspire only to salvation, and whose desire for goodness takes the form of attrition rather than of contrition. Contemplative life is for those who love God for his own sake and desire him alone. Mixed life is made up of both active life and contemplative life. For those who are free to follow it, contemplative life is the best; but, since the pleasure of God is the one thing necessary, a clear duty must not be set aside in order to follow what seems to be a higher call. Mixed life is for those who, like the man for whom this epistle was written, feel called to a life of perfection and contemplation but are prevented by force of circumstances from devoting themselves entirely to the contemplative life. These men, following the example of our Lord, are to use both active life and contemplative life; but, if after a time they are set free from worldly ties, they can

then devote themselves wholly to the contemplative life. In the meantime their duties, if properly performed, will be a help rather than a hindrance to their prayers. Feelings are negligible; love of God is to be measured by desire of God and the will to please him, and it is shown by deeds. But this desire is not perfect love, which can be attained only in heaven, in the final consummation of that union of the soul with God known as the spiritual marriage. The treatise shows the influence of St Augustine and of St Gregory.

The majority of the manuscripts state that the *Eight Chapters on Perfection* were found in Master Lewis de Fontibus' book at Cambridge and turned into English by Master Walter Hilton of Thurgarton. Master Lewis de Fontibus has hitherto been regarded as a monk of Fountains Abbey; but the *Rotuli of Hugo, Bishop of Lincoln*, 1209-1235, published by the Canterbury and York Society, contains two references to a Walter de Fontibus whose name occurs in connection with the institution of parsons to the mediety of Rowsham. In the first case the subdeacon is presented by the King, who holds the land of Walter de Fontibus, which is of the fee of Robert, Count of Dreux;* and in the second case the sub-

* *Annus* XIX, p. 27.

deacon is presented by Walter de Fontibus.* The editor, therefore, suggests that de Fontibus may merely have been the family name of Lewis, who may have lived at Cambridge. The treatise deals with the way of perfection, in which the first step is to forsake all earthly things and to seek the friendship of Christ, striving to be like him. The contemplative who has entered upon this way must not expect consolation; but he will experience every kind of temptation and tribulation. However great his desolation, he must not despair, but he must pray continually, and in time God will send him consolation. Discretion must be observed in all things, in fasting and works of penance, in vocal prayers and meditations, and especially in intercourse with others. Christ is the standard by which the contemplative must judge his neighbour, and Christ must be his own example. The treatise describes the various stages of contemplation, and concludes with a strong warning against inordinate affection for creatures. The emphasis laid upon the virtue of discretion is probably inspired by Richard of St Victor's treatise *Benjamin Minor*. The influence of St Augustine and of Richard Rolle of Hampole is also apparent. At the end of ch. iii

* *Annus* XXIIII, p. 42.

is a warning that probably has reference to the Lollard heresy.

In *Lambeth MS.* 472 no mention is made of the author of the last three treatises. For the purposes of the present edition it has seemed desirable to divide the first two of these—viz., *Qui Habitat* and *Bonum Est*—into chapters, and to supply chapter-headings. *Qui Habitat* is an application of Psalm xc to the way of perfection. The soul, surrounded by worldly pleasures and friends, is called by God to a life of perfection, and, notwithstanding opposition, it responds to the call. The various temptations that befall the contemplative are described, and the soul is taught how to withstand them. This is the way of purgation, and the soul in this state must meditate often on the Manhood of Christ. But after this process of cleansing, the eye of the soul will be opened to the contemplation of God, first in his works and afterwards in himself. In the latter part of this treatise the writer attains a degree of sublimity equal to the work of Hilton in the latter part of Book II of *The Scale of Perfection*. The close resemblance between *Qui Habitat* and portions of *The Scale of Perfection* and of *The Song of Angels* is shown in the notes. It seems almost as if Hilton, in writing Book II of *The Scale of Perfection*, may have used and amplified this shorter

work on Psalm xc. Chapter iii contains a passage which appears to have been modelled on a passage in *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and ch. xv shows the influence of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. *Bonum Est* is an exposition of Psalm xci. The soul who in true contrition has entered upon the way of perfection must be cheerful, alike in consolation and in desolation, and must be ready to suffer the will of God in all things. God is to be contemplated first in his works and afterwards in himself, and love toucheth God where knowing faileth. The style of Hilton is not at first sight apparent in this treatise, but it becomes more evident towards the end of the work. Portions of *Bonum Est*, especially ch. v, resemble *The Cloud of Unknowing* and its attendant treatises, and the influence of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite is more marked than in *Qui Habitat*. The author evidently had in mind St Augustine's exposition of the same Psalm. *Benedictus* also bears the stamp of Hilton, and the editor considers that all three treatises are by the author of *The Scale of Perfection*.

The only reliable information available in regard to Hilton is that he was a Canon of the Order of St Augustine at the monastery of St Peter, Thurgarton, Nottinghamshire. In *Camb. Univ. MS.* Hh. 1. 12, he is de-

scribed as "chanon and gouernoure of þe house of Thurgarton biside Newark." A number of the manuscripts and early printed books refer to him as "Master," "a title at that time reserved for theological doctors."*

Hilton has also been described as a Carthusian monk, and it has been erroneously stated that he belonged to the monastery of Sheen, which, however, was not founded until 1422, about twenty-six years after his death. The following extract is taken from Messrs. Sotheby's catalogue of the sale of the library of Sir John Brooke (May 25 to June 3, 1921):

776. HILTON (WALTER, *Carthusian Monk*) Scala perfectionis, that is as muche ffor to say in englysshe as yᵉ ladder of perfection, MS. on VELLUM, ENGLISH XIVTH CENTURY, 78 *leaves* (7½ *by* 5½ *in.*), *written in small* gothic *characters, by two hands, long lines, capitals painted in red and blue, olive morocco extra, woodcut inserted; from the library of the Rev. G. Offor, who has written a long note on the fly-leaves.*

8vo XIV CENT.

The editor is of the opinion, however, that the statement of John Grenehalgh on the cover of Lord Aldenham's book finally disposes of the theory that Hilton belonged to the Carthusian Order; for it is improbable that a Carthusian monk, who had come from

* *The Scale of Perfection* (ed. Dom M. Noetinger, vol. xiii of this series), Introduction, p. vi.

the same district as Hilton and held both him and his writings in such high esteem, would have failed to mention that he had belonged to the Carthusian Order, had this been the case. Moreover, a monk of Parkminster, in an unpublished work on the *Parkminster MS.* of *The Cloud of Unknowing* most kindly lent to the editor, in dealing with the question of authorship expresses the opinion that the fact of *The Cloud of Unknowing* having originally been written in the vernacular makes it highly improbable that the author was a Carthusian. The same writer states that Latin was then, and is still, the official language of the Carthusian Order; that up to the end of the fifteenth century there is no trace in the Order of any writing in the vernacular; that, with the exception of the Kalendar, books are forbidden to the lay-brothers by the Rule; and that a Carthusian would have rather translated a book from the vernacular into Latin than from Latin into the vernacular. (In regard to this last statement, it is interesting to note that *The Cloud of Unknowing* was probably translated into Latin by Richard Methley, Carthusian, of Mount Grace in Yorkshire.*) The same hypothesis holds good in the case of the author

* *The Cloud of Unknowing* (ed. Dom J. McCann, vol. iv of this series), Introduction, pp. xvii-xviii.

of *The Scale of Perfection*; for the earlier manuscripts and, indeed, the majority of the extant manuscripts are in the vernacular, although a fifteenth-century Latin translation is extant in *Bodleian Rawlinson MS.* 39, with the following title:

> Tractatus qui dicitur Scala perfectionis, "a domino Waltero de Hilton, canonico de Thurgarton (sic) cuidam sanctimonali in wlgari Anglicano, sc. in lingua materna, editus . . . postmodum in Latinum per quendam sacre theologie doctorem in Latinum translatus."*

Further, the MSS. agree that the *Eight Chapters on Perfection* were "turned into English by Master Walter Hilton of Thurgarton," and presumably the original of this short treatise was written in Latin.

Grenehalgh's statement also makes improbable Hilton's identification with Brother Walter, Canon of the Holy Trinity, London, author of the *Speculum Religiosorum* in *B. M. Add. MS.* 10052.† This improbability is borne out by the following note in *B. M. Add. MS.* 10053:

> Orate *pro anima domini* Iohannis Pery canonici ecclesie *sancte* trinitatis london infra algate qui hu*nc* librum fieri fecit cuius a*nime* p*ro*picietur deus Amen.

* Catalogue of MSS. in the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

† See *The Scale of Perfection* (ed. E. Underhill), Introduction, p. vii, note 1.

The copyist of *B. M. Add. MS.* 10053 must have been acquainted with the Canons of the Holy Trinity, London, but in the title prefixed to *Eight Chapters on Perfection* he merely refers to the translator of the treatise as "maist*er* wat*ere* hilt*on* chan*on* of thorgorton." Had so famous a writer as Walter Hilton ever belonged to the monastery for which the MS. was copied, the copyist would scarcely have omitted to mention the fact. The *Speculum Religiosorum* is written in Latin, and the very brief examination of the work made by the editor has not revealed any evidences of Hilton's style.

In *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 the following title precedes Book II of *The Scale of Perfection*:

> Here bygynip þe secu*n*de part of þe reformyng of ma*n*nys soule drawyn of maistir watir hiltone hermyte.

This MS. was written in the latter half of the fifteenth century, a little less than a century after the death of Hilton, and it is possible that the scribe may have become confused between Hilton and his predecessor Richard Rolle, who is known to have lived as a hermit.

The date of Hilton's death is usually given as the Vigil of the Feast of the Annunciation, 1395-96; but the colophon to the

Scala Perfectionis in *Camb. Univ. MS.* Ee IV 30 reads as follows:

*Explicit libellus Magistri Walteri Hilton canonici de Thurgarton, qui obiit Anno Dni MCCCXCV. decimo kalendas Apriles circa solis occasum.**

And John Grenehalgh states that Hilton died on the Vigil of the Feast of the Assumption, 1395, at Thurgarton, adding that he himself had come from the same district. It is interesting to note that the name Greenhalgh is still extant in Nottinghamshire.

Hilton is best known to us by his longest work, *The Scale of Perfection*, first printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1494. Of the other writings that can be definitely attributed to him, only *Mixed Life* and *The Song of the Angels* have hitherto been printed.

But, in discussing the work of Hilton, it is necessary to take into consideration the vexed question of the authorship of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and of its attendant treatises—viz., *The Epistle of Privy Counsel*, *The Epistle of Prayer*, *The Epistle of Discretion*, *The Treatise of Discerning of Spirits*, and the translations of Richard of St Victor's *Benjamin Minor* and of Denis' *Hid Divinity*. While the editor is no more able than her

* Catalogue of MSS. in the University Library, Cambridge.

predecessors to solve the mystery, she wishes to draw attention to one or two points that may have some bearing on the matter.

The authorship of *The Cloud of Unknowing* has been ascribed to various persons. The Rev. M. McIntyre suggests that the author may have been the Master Lewis de Fontibus, whose name occurs in the manuscripts in connection with *The Eight Chapters on Perfection*.* The colophon to the *Parkminster MS.*, *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and *The Epistle of Privy Counsel* is probably responsible for the assumption that these treatises were the work of either Blessed William Exmew or Dom Maurice Chauncey. This assumption is manifestly erroneous, for the manuscripts date from at least a century prior to the time of these Carthusians. On the question of Carthusian authorship of these treatises Miss Underhill writes:

> It has been thought that he was a Carthusian. But the rule of that austere order, whose members live in hermit-like seclusion, and scarcely meet except for the purpose of divine worship, can hardly have afforded him opportunity of observing and enduring all those tiresome tricks and absurd mannerisms of which he gives so amusing and realistic a description in the lighter passages of the *Cloud*.†

* *Expositor*, ser. 7, vol. iv, 1907, pp. 373-84.

† *The Cloud of Unknowing* (ed. E. Underhill), Introduction, pp. vii-viii.

The monk of Parkminster quoted above, while showing that the spirit of observation is not incompatible with the solitary life, agrees that the descriptive passages in *The Cloud of Unknowing* referred to by Miss Underhill do, in fact, suggest that the author lived in a less austere environment than that of a Carthusian monastery. To this argument against the Carthusian authorship of these treatises he adds the general use of Latin by Carthusian writers; the rare occurrence of scriptural quotations in *The Cloud of Unknowing* itself, and the originality of the doctrine set forth therein. He states that there are, as it were, two schools of mysticism. The one is more transcendent and is reserved for special souls; the other is more modest in its aims and more within the reach of all. *The Cloud of Unknowing* is typical of the former and *The Imitation of Christ* of the latter school. The Carthusian Order, he states, has always been attached to the latter school. Dom J. McCann expresses the view that the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* was

> a University man—Cambridge is perhaps more likely than Oxford—who became incumbent of a parish in East Anglia, and there pursued the study and practice of the contemplative life.*

* *The Cloud of Unknowing*, Introduction, pp. xiv-xv.

If, as is suggested on p. xxxix above, Lewis de Fontibus was not a monk of Fountains Abbey, but lived at Cambridge, then, in accordance with Dom McCann's theory, he would once again become a candidate for the authorship of these treatises.

But the most important claimant to the authorship of *The Cloud of Unknowing* is undoubtedly Walter Hilton, whose claims have already been stated very fully by Dom McCann,* and the editor can only add a few supplementary points in favour of the authorship of Hilton.

In the following passage from *The Epistle of Privy Counsel* the author refers to some of his previous works:

> I touch no virtue here in special, for it needeth not; thou hast them touched in other diverse places of mine own writing. For this same work, if it be verily conceived, is that reverent affection and the fruit separated from the tree that I spoke of in the little *Epistle of Prayer*. This is the *cloud of unknowing*; this is that privy love put in purity of spirit; this is the ark of the testament. This is Denis' divinity, his wisdom and his treasure, his lightsome darkness and his unknown knowing. This it is that setteth thee in silence, as well from thoughts as from words. This maketh thy prayer full short.†

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* *Ampleforth Journal*, Summer Number, 1924.

† *The Epistle of Privy Counsel* (ed. Dom J. McCann, vol. iv of this series), ch. vii, p. 211.

Treating of the bearing of this passage on the question of Hilton's claim to authorship, Dom Noetinger writes:

> Besides, another argument against the identification may perhaps be found in the *Epistle of Privy Counsel*. This epistle is undoubtedly the work of a man "consummatus" in age as well as in wisdom. The style has no longer the alertness which makes the *Cloud* so lively, and the thought itself seems sometimes to be growing dim, with a tendency to repetition. About the middle of the *Epistle* the writer gives a sort of catalogue of his own previous works, among which he puts the *Cloud*—and this is surely enough to do away with any doubt as to the single authorship of the *Cloud* and this *Epistle*—but he does not mention any of Hilton's works. If we suppose that Hilton wrote the *Cloud* and this *Epistle*, then we are bound to conclude that he wrote the *Scale of Perfection*, the *Song of Angels*, etc., later on, that is, in extreme old age. And this does not seem very credible.*

But in the passage quoted above the author writes: "*Thou* hast them touched in other diverse places of mine own writing." As *The Epistle of Privy Counsel* was addressed to an individual disciple, may it not be that in the list of works which follows the author has mentioned only those addressed to the same disciple?

Both Hilton and the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing* are indebted to the same

* *Blackfriars*, March, 1924.

sources, chief of which are the works of St Augustine, St Gregory the Great, Richard of St Victor, St Bonaventure and pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, and also the Latin Vulgate. Both writers frequently adopt the interrogatory style that is characteristic of some of the works of St Augustine, more especially of his *Enarrationes in Psalmos*; both also make use of such expressions as "the liquor of grace" or "the wettings of grace," "the lovely beholding" of God, and of the simile of the bark and kernel of the nut.

Passages in the works of Hilton are very similar to passages in the works of the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, although in the latter class of works these passages are usually more expanded and are adapted to the more intellectual plane of thought. In at least two cases these similar passages bear a close resemblance to portions of an English translation of the *Stimulus Amoris* of St Bonaventure, extant in *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2254. In *The Epistle of Privy Counsel*, ch. ix, pp. 218-221, and in *The Scale of Perfection*, Book I, ch. xcii, p. 221, the meditation of the Manhood and Passion of Christ is described as the door by which a soul should enter into contemplation, and these passages resemble the following extract from the *Stimulus Amoris*:

The second is that thou strive thee in all that thou may for to have compassion of Christ's passion over all, bearing it in heart; for unless we can have compassion we may not receive consolation. If thou may think on his passion deeply, and may enter with thine affection into the wound of his side, thou shalt soon then come to his heart; and then may thou rest thee there as in thy bedstead. Whoso weeneth to come to contemplation of Christ and cometh not by this door, nor by this way, nor by the bitterness of Christ in his manhood, he is but a thief and a micher;* for when he weeneth to be within, he is full far without. How may a man come to Christ and he to him and have him without Christ? Nay, it may not be. For he saith himself: " I am the way, and soothfastness, and life." Therefore go after him in way of his manhood that thou may come to life of his Godhead.

In the note to p. 178, ch. ii, of *Bonum Est*, reference is made to ch. xii of *The Epistle of Privy Counsel* and to ch. xli of Book II of *The Scale of Perfection*. These two chapters deal with the state of a soul in consolation and in desolation, and the underlying thought is the same in each, notwithstanding the difference of intellectual standpoint. Both chapters, however, resemble the following passage from the MS. of the *Stimulus Amoris* referred to above:

Nevertheless, if he will a little withdraw him for to assay thee, look that thou cease not to seek him

* A secret or petty thief; one who goes " sneaking about " for dishonest or improper purposes.

again in what wise thou may, until thou have founden him. Ah, what sorrow, what weeping, and what mourning thou shalt make when thy spouse is aught hid from thee! But then is this a wondrous thing: that when thee thinketh that Jesu had hid him from thee and thou art busy with all thine heart for to seek him, he is then with thee and thou knowest not. But shall Jesu thy loved aye hide him from thee? Nay soothly, but he will show him when him list. And thou then, when thou seest Him whom thou hast so burningly sought, thou shalt then all turn into love. But thou shalt aye have reverence and dread. What grace and what comfort thou shalt feel experience shall teach thee. But, nevertheless, hear now. When thou weenest to be secure of him he shall again suddenly absent him suddenly from thy sight. And then shalt thou have more longing and more burning desire after him till thou have with mickle seeking founden him again. What may I say? Soothly, as oft as he shall absent him from thee and play with thee thus, coming and going, until thou be made so busy for to keep him that thou be not secure for to hold him, but that all be suspect to thee—both his coming and his going—this is the game of love. His absence shall make thee for to mourn for him and live in longing, and his presence shall fill thee with pigment* of his sweetness and make thee like drunken. But what he shall give thee after this drunkenness, by assay thou might wit if he will. For why, he is wondrous liberal and mickle more courteous for to give than men ween.

In the notes to the treatises here printed the editor has endeavoured to draw attention

* A drink composed of wine sweetened with honey and flavoured with spices.

to parallel passages in the writings of both Hilton and the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*. The description of love as the foot of the soul, occurring in the works of both writers, was doubtless derived from the passage by St Augustine quoted in Note ‖, p. 104, below. Possibly, too, St Augustine's exposition of the words *Justus ut palma florebit* is responsible not only for the passage in *Bonum Est* but also for the simile of the tree in *The Epistle of Prayer*, although in each case the application is different. There may be common sources for other passages of the kind. For instance, the description of the difficulties encountered by the neophyte, in chapter iii of *Qui Habitat*, indicates either a deliberate attempt on the part of the writer to imitate the passage from *The Cloud of Unknowing*, quoted in Note ‡, p. 122, below, or a common source of both passages, or else that both treatises are the work of the same author. The style of the passage in *Qui Habitat* does certainly seem to be more forced than that of the passage in *The Cloud of Unknowing*, a fact which points to imitation; but, assuming that Hilton was the author of both treatises, it is possible that he wrote *Qui Habitat* in later life when his style had become less vigorous. Again, ch. xxxvi of Book I of *The Scale of Perfection* re-

sembles the first paragraph of ch. xiii of *The Epistle of Privy Counsel*, and both passages appear to have been inspired by St Augustine's explanation of the words *Expedit vobis ut vadam*. The following extracts are illustrative of the parallel passages in the two classes of works:

(*a*) From treatises by Walter Hilton.

The Scale of Perfection (ed. E. Underhill), Book I, ch. viii, pp. 14-15:

> The beginning of this contemplation may be felt in this life, but the fullhead of it is kept unto the bliss of heaven. Of this oning and conforming to our Lord speaketh Saint Paul, thus: *Qui adhaeret Deo unus spiritus est cum illo*. That is for to say whoso by ravishing of love is fastened to God, then God and a soul are not two but one. Not in flesh. but in one spirit. And soothly in this oning is the marriage made atwixt God and the soul, which shall never be broken.

Song of Angels (*Cell of Self-Knowledge*, p. 63):

> Wete thou well that the end and the sovereignty of perfection standeth in very onehead of God and of a man's soul by perfect charity.

(*b*) From treatises by the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*:

The Epistle of Prayer (*Cell of Self-Knowledge*, pp. 87-8):

And for that that I would that thou knew what manner of working it is that knitteth man's soul to God, and that maketh it one with him in love and accordance of will, after the word of saint Paul saying thus: *Qui adhaeret Deo unus spiritus est cum illo ;* that is to say: "Who so draweth near to God," as it is by such a reverent affection touched before "he is one spirit with God." That is, though all that God and he be two and sere in kind, nevertheless yet in grace they are so knit together that they are but one in spirit; and all this is for onehead of love and accordance of will; and in this onehead is the marriage made between God and the soul, the which shall never be broken, though all that the heat and the fervour of this work cease for a time, but by a deadly sin.

The Epistle of Privy Counsel, ch. vii, p. 210:

At the first I ask of thee, what is perfection of man's soul and which be the properties that pertain to this perfection? I answer in thy person and say that perfection of man's soul is nought else but a onehead made betwixt God and it in perfect charity.

The Cloud of Unknowing, ch. viii, p. 32:

That is to say, to be knit to God in spirit, in onehead of love and accordance of will.

Both *The Scale of Perfection* and *The Cloud of Unknowing* deal with the mystical life; but in the latter work the treatment of the subject is more philosophical and intellectual than in the former, and the style is more vivacious. In each book the desire

of the author is to teach his disciple how to arrive at the aim of the spiritual life, union with God; for the search for Jesu hidden in the soul, described by Hilton in *The Scale of Perfection*, is in reality the same process as the attempt to pierce the cloud with a sharp dart of longing love, advocated in *The Cloud of Unknowing*. If *The Epistle of Privy Counsel* was written as a supplement to *The Cloud of Unknowing*, there would be yet another point of similarity between the two works, as *The Scale of Perfection* is written in two books, Book II being supplementary to Book I. It is noteworthy also that, notwithstanding the difference of treatment, Book II of *The Scale of Perfection* and *The Epistle of Privy Counsel* do resemble each other very closely.

Dom Noetinger cites the description of a crown in *The Epistle of Discretion* as an indication that the author lived in Scotland, for although the description would be applicable to the crown of France, it is unlikely that an author writing in France would have used the English tongue.* But Dom Noetinger also makes mention of a manuscript in which Walter Hilton is called a doctor of the University of Paris,† and if

* *Blackfriars*, March, 1924.

† *The Scale of Perfection* (ed. Dom M. Noetinger, vol. xiii of this series), Introduction, p. vi.

Hilton did actually study at that University, this description of a crown would certainly be a point in favour of assigning the authorship of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and its attendant treatises (including *The Epistle of Discretion*) to him. Further, Hilton himself, in the last chapter of Book I of *The Scale of Perfection*, writes as follows:

> Also these words that I write take them not too strictly, but where thou thinkest by good avisement that I speak too shortly, either for lacking of English or wanting of reason, I pray thee amend it only where need is.

The editor suggests that the alert style of *The Cloud of Unknowing* may be the result of French influence, and Dom Noetinger is of the opinion that this work was written much earlier in the life of the author than was *The Epistle of Privy Counsel*. If, therefore, Hilton were the author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, both this work and the earlier version of Book I of *The Scale of Perfection* might have been written by him while still under the influence, not only of the French rather than the English style of writing, but also of the philosophical outlook of the University.

Dom McCann, referring to the *Douce MS.* of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, " written by a monk of the London Charterhouse,

William Tregoose, who died in 1514,"* states that the scribe " is quite sure that the work which he is copying was written by Walter Hilton."† John Grenehalgh, the monk of the Sheen Charterhouse who, on the cover of Lord Aldenham's book, after mentioning Hilton's death at Thurgarton, states that he himself had come from the same district, was living in 1499. William Tregoose and John Grenehalgh, therefore, were probably contemporaries; and it seems reasonable to assume that there was a certain amount of intercourse between the Charterhouses of London and of Sheen, an assumption that is supported by the verbal similarity of the beginning of John Grenehalgh's statement in Lord Aldenham's book to the statement on the fly-leaf of the London Charterhouse manuscript of *The Scale of Perfection*. It is possible, therefore, that William Tregoose and John Grenehalgh, each of whom was employed in the scriptorium of his monastery, may have met from time to time in connection with their duties as copyists, and that William Tregoose may have obtained his information as to Walter Hilton from Grenehalgh.

All these suggestions, however, are purely

* *The Cloud of Unknowing*, p. 48, notes.

† *The Ampleforth Journal*, Summer Number, 1924, p. 196.

hypothetical, and bring us no nearer to solving the problem of the authorship of *The Cloud of Unknowing* and its attendant treatises. The editor hopes, at a later date, to consider both *Lambeth MS.* 472 and the writings of Walter Hilton from other points of view that would be out of place in the introduction to this book.

The quotations from the Fathers of the Church, given in the notes, are taken from Migne's *Patrologia*. The modern equivalents of the Middle English words have been taken from either the *New English Dictionary* or the *English Dialect Dictionary*, or Strathmann's *Middle English Dictionary*, or the *New Standard Dictionary of the English Language*. Although it has been necessary to take certain liberties with the text, the original language and style have been retained as far as possible, and when it has been necessary to substitute a modern word for an obsolete or archaic word, the editor has endeavoured to choose a word closely resembling the Middle English equivalent. When it has been necessary to refer in the notes to parallel passages in other mystical writings of the period, the references are to the editions of these works already published in the Orchard Series. Except where otherwise stated, extracts given in the notes are also taken from editions in the Orchard Series.

The chapter divisions of the various manuscripts and printed editions of *Mixed Life* have been given in the notes, together with the more important of the different readings. These show that *B. M. Royal MS.* 17 C xviii resembles most closely the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525, and 1533.

In conclusion, the editor has to thank His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury for lending *Lambeth MS.* 472 to the British Museum for her use, and the Rev. Dr. Jenkins, Librarian of Lambeth Palace, for arranging the transference of this MS. to the Museum for a considerable period of time. She has also to thank Professor A. W. Reed of King's College, London, for his invaluable advice and assistance throughout, especially in the early stages of searching records, and for reading the proof of this book. Lastly, she has to thank her friend, Miss A. A. Rowsell, for her help in checking the typescript, and Dom Roger Hudleston, O.S.B., general editor of this series, for reading the proofs.

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I

HERE BEGINNETH THE BOOK THAT IS CALLED MIXED LIFE, WHICH IS DRAWN OUT BETWEEN ACTIVE LIFE AND LIFE CONTEMPLATIVE

CHAPTER I

TO WHAT MANNER OF MEN BELONGETH MIXED* LIFE, AND HOW THEY SHALL FORSAKE THEIR SINS AND ABLE THEMSELVES TO THE SERVICE OF GOD AND TO GHOSTLY WORKING†

‡[BROTHER and sister, bodily and ghostly,§]‖ two manner of states there be in Holy Church, by the which Christian souls please God and get them the bliss¶ of heaven: the one is bodily and the other is ghostly.**

Bodily working belongeth principally to worldly men or women, the which have

* MS. medelid.

† In *Lambeth MS.* 472 and in *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 this heading is given only in the Table of Contents and is not repeated at the beginning of the chapter.

‡ Here begins ch. i in *B. M. Harl.* 2397 and *Royal* 17 C xviii *MSS.*, and in the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525, 1531 and 1533.

§ Spiritual.

‖ The printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525, 1531 and 1533 read "Dear brother in Christ."

¶ Perfect joy or felicity.

** *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. ii, pp. 2-3, and *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. viii, p. 30.

lawfully worldly goods and wilfully use worldly businesses. Also it belongeth to all young beginning men, which come newly out of worldly sins to the service of God; for to make them able to* ghostly working, and for to break down the unbuxomness† of the body by reason and by such bodily working, that it might be supple and ready, and not much contrarious to the spirit in ghostly working. For, as St Paul saith, *as woman was made for man and not man for woman*,‡ right so bodily working was made for ghostly and not ghostly for bodily.§

Bodily working goeth before and ghostly cometh after:‖ so saith St Paul, *Non quod*

* Fitted for. † Disobedience. ‡ 1 *Cor.* xi 9.

§ *Cf.* St Augustine: *et Apostolus ait, Qui diligit uxorem suam, seipsum diligit; nemo enim unquam carnem suam odio habet. Ponitur ergo caro pro uxore, quomodo et aliquando spiritus pro marito. Quare? Quia illa regit, hæc regitur: ille imperare debet, ista servire. Nam ubi caro imperat, et spiritus servit, perversa domus est. Quid peius domo, ubi femina habet imperium super virum? Recta autem domus, ubi vir imperat, femina obtemperat. Rectus ergo ipse homo, ubi spiritus imperat, caro servit.* (*In Joannis Evang. Tract.* II, *Caput* i, 14.) *Cf.* also *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. lxi, p. 146: "For all bodily thing is subject unto ghostly thing and is ruled thereafter, and not contrariwise."

‖ *Cf.* St Gregory: *Actio contemplationem debet antecedere.—Actionis namque tempus primum est, contemplationis extremum.* (*Moral. Lib.* VII, *in Caput* v *B. Job*, 60.)

prius spirituale, sed quod prius animale, deinde spirituale. " Ghostly work cometh not first, but first cometh bodily work that is done by the body, and sithen* cometh ghostly work after."† And this is the cause why it behoveth‡ to be so: for we are born in sin and in corruption of the flesh, by the which we are blinded and so overlaid that we have neither the ghostly knowing of God by light of understanding, nor ghostly feeling of him by clean desire of loving. And therefore we may not suddenly start out of this murk§ pit‖ of this fleshly corruption into that ghostly light; for we may not suffer it nor bear it for sickness of ourselves, no more than we may with our bodily eyes when they are sore behold the light of the sun. And therefore we must abide and work by process of time,¶ first by bodily works busily until we be discharged of this heavy burden of sin, the which letteth** us from ghostly working, and till our souls be somewhat cleansed from great outward sins and abled to ghostly work.

By this bodily working that I speak of, mayest thou understand all manner of good

* Afterwards. † 1 *Cor.* xv 46.
‡ It is proper or due. § Obscure, dark.
‖ The printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533 read " dark night."
¶ In course of time. ** Hindereth.

works that thy soul doeth by the wits and the members of thy body unto thyself (as in fasting, waking,* and in refraining of thy fleshly lusts by other penance doing), or to thine even-Christian† by fulfilling of the deeds of mercy bodily or ghostly, or unto God by suffering of all manner of mischiefs‡ for the love of righteousness. All these works done in troth§ by charity‖ please God, without the which they are nought.

Then whoso desireth for to be occupied ghostly, it is secure and profitable to him that he be first well assayed a long time in this bodily working; for these bodily deeds are a token and a shewing of moral virtues without which a soul is not able for to work ghostly. Break down first pride in bodily bearing and also within thine heart, thinking, boasting and praising of thyself and of thy deeds, presuming of thyself, vain liking in thyself of anything that God hath sent to thee bodily or ghostly. Break down also envy and wrath against thine even-Christian, whether he be rich or poor, good or bad; that thou hate him not, nor have disdain of him wilfully, neither in word nor in deed. Also, break down covetousness of worldly

* Keeping vigil as an act of devotion, passing the night in prayer.

† Fellow-Christian. ‡ Misfortunes, troubles.

§ Faith. ‖ Love (*L. caritas*).

good; that thou for holding, or getting, or saving of it offend not thy conscience, nor break not charity to God and to thine even-Christian for love of no worldly good, but that thou gettest to keep it and spend it without love and vain liking of it, as reason asketh, in worship* of God and help of thine even-Christian.† Break down, as much as thou may, fleshly likings, either in accidie,‡ or in bodily ease, or gluttony, or lechery. And then, when thou hast been well travailed and well assayed in all such bodily works, then mayest thou by grace ordain thee§ to ghostly working.

* Honour.

† For style *cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. lvii, p. 107: "As to this I say thus: that he that loveth his worship so as to seem better and greater of estate than any other, and travaileth about it as much as he may, if he love it so much that, for the getting of it, the keeping and the saving of it, he breaketh the commandment of God, or breaketh love and charity to his even-Christian, or is ready and in full will to break it rather than that he should forbear his worship or lose it, either of his name or of his state, or of fulfilling of his will, soothly he sinneth deadly; for he loveth his worship and chooseth it more than the love of God, and of his even-Christian."

‡ Sloth, sluggishness.

§ Prepare thyself for, apply thyself to.

CHAPTER II

HOW THAT A MAN THAT IS SET ONLY TO GHOSTLY LIVING SHALL RULE ALL HIS DEEDS BY DISCRETION, WITHOUT WHICH THEY TURN OFTEN INTO VICE

*GRACE and goodness of our Lord Jesus Christ, that he hath shewn to thee in withdrawing of thine heart from love and liking of worldly vanity and use of fleshly sins, and in turning of thy will entirely to his service and his pleasure, bring into mine† heart much matter to love him and his mercy. And also it stirreth me greatly to strengthen thee in thy good purpose and in thy good working that thou hast begun, for to bring it to a good end (if that I could) and principally for God, and sith‡ for tender affection of love which thou hast to me.

Although I be a wretch and unworthy, §

* Here begin the Prologue in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494, and ch. ii in *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 and in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

† *Lambeth MS.* 472 and *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 read "thy."

‡ Afterwards.

§ Here begins ch. i in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

I know well the desire of thine heart: that thou yearnest greatly to serve our Lord by ghostly occupation all wholly, without letting* or troubling of worldly business, that thou mightest come by grace to more knowing and ghostly feeling of God and of ghostly things. This desire is good, as I believe, and of God; for it is set unto him in charity specially.† Nevertheless, it is to be restrained and ruled by discretion as regards outward working, after‡ the state that thou art in; for charity unruled turneth sometimes into vice. And therefore it is said in Holy Writ, *Ordinavit in me caritatem.* That is to say, "Our Lord, giving to me charity, set it in order and in rule,"§ that it should not be lost through mine indiscretion. Right so this charity and this desire that our Lord hath given of his mercy to thee is to be ruled and ordained how thou shalt pursue it, after thy degree‖ asketh, and after the living that thou hast used before this time, and after the grace of virtues that thou now hast.

Thou shalt not utterly follow thy desire for to leave occupation and business of the world (which are needful to use in ruling

* Hindrance.

† The printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533 read "spiritually."

‡ According as or to. § *Cant.* ii 4. ‖ Rank.

of thyself and of all others that are under thy keeping) and give thee wholly to ghostly occupations of prayers and meditations, as it were a friar, or a monk, or another man that were not bounden to the world by children and servants as thou art; for it falleth not to thee,* and if thou do so thou keepest not the order of charity. Also, if thou wouldest leave utterly ghostly occupation—namely, now after the grace that God hath given unto thee—and set thee wholly to the business of the world in fulfilling of works of active life, as fully as in another man that never felt devotion, thou leavest the order of charity; for thy state asketh for to do both, each of them in divers† times. ‡Thou shalt meddle§ the works of active life with ghostly works of life contemplative, and then doest thou well. For thou shalt one time with Martha be busy for to rule and govern thy household, thy children, thy servants, thy neighbours, thy tenants (if they do well, comfort them therein and help them: if they do evil, for to teach them to amend them and chastise them): and thou shalt also look and know wisely that thy

* It is not proper for thee. † Different.

‡ Here begins ch. ii in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

§ Mix, mingle.

things and thy worldly goods be rightfully kept by thy servants' governing and truly expended, that thou might the more plenteously fulfil the deeds of mercy with them unto thy even-Christian. Also thou shalt with Maria leave business of the world, and sit down at the foot of our Lord by meekness* in prayers, and in holy thoughts, and in contemplation of him as he giveth thee grace. And so shalt thou go on from the one to the other meedfully† and fulfil them both. And then keepest thou well the order of charity.‡

* Gentleness of spirit, humility.

† In a meritorious manner.

‡ Martha and Mary are held by St Augustine and St Gregory to typify the active and contemplative lives (see Dom E. C. Butler: *Western Mysticism*, pp. 200-2 and 214-5).

CHAPTER III

UNTO WHAT MANNER OF MEN BELONGETH ACTIVE LIFE

*NEVERTHELESS, that thou have no wonder of this that I say, therefore I shall tell and declare to thee a little of this matter more openly.

†Thou shalt understand that there are three manners of living: one is active, another is contemplative, the third is made of both and that is mixed.

Active life alone belongeth to worldly men and women, which are lewd,‡ [fleshly and boisterous§] ‖ in knowing of ghostly occupation; for they feel no savour in devotion by fervour of love as other men do, nor have they any skill in it. And yet,

* Here begin ch. iii in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531, and ch. ii in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533.

† Here begin ch. iii in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494, and ch. ii in *B. M. Royal MS.* 17 C xviii.

‡ Ignorant.

§ Rough, untaught.

‖ Inserted from the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and from the printed edition of 1494.

nevertheless, they have dread* of God and of the pains of hell, and therefore they flee sin, and they have desire for to please God and for to come to heaven, and they have a good will to their even-Christians. Unto these men it is needful and speedful to use the works of active life, as busily as they may, for help of themselves and of their even-Christians; for they can do nought else.

* Awe, reverence, fear.

CHAPTER IV

UNTO WHAT MEN BELONGETH CONTEMPLATIVE LIFE

*CONTEMPLATIVE life alone belongeth to such men and women that for the love of God forsake all open sins of the world and of their flesh, and all business, charges and government† of worldly goods, and make themselves poor and naked to the bare need of the bodily kind,‡ and flee from sovereignty§ of all other men to the service of God. Unto these men it belongeth for to travail and occupy them inwardly,‖ for to get through the grace of our Lord cleanness of heart and peace in conscience, by destroying of sins and receiving of virtues, and so for

* Here begin ch. iii in *B. M. Royal MS.* 17 C xviii and in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. iv in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

† Here begins the text of *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2254.

‡ Nature.

§ Rule.

‖ The *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* read " in the world."

to come to contemplation: which cleanness may not be had without great exercise of body and continual travail of spirit, in devout prayers, fervent desires and ghostly meditations.

CHAPTER V

UNTO WHICH MEN BELONGETH MIXED LIFE

*THE third life that is mixed belongeth especially to men of Holy Church—as to prelates and other curates,† which have cure‡ and sovereignty over other men for to teach and for to rule them (both their bodies and principally their souls) in fulfilling of the deeds of mercy bodily and ghostly. Unto these men it belongeth sometimes to use the works of mercy in active life, in help and sustenance of themselves, and of their subjects, and of others also; and sometimes for to leave all manner of outward business, and give themselves unto prayers and meditations, reading of Holy Writ, and to other ghostly occupations after that they feel themselves disposed. Also it belongeth generally to some temporal men, the which

* Here begin ch. iv in the *Bodleian Vernon*, *B. M. Add.* 22283, and *B. M. Royal* 17 C xviii *MSS.*, and in the printed editions of 1494, 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. v in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

† Spiritual pastors.

‡ Charge, care (of).

have sovereignty with much wealth* of worldly goods, and have also as it were lordship over other men for to govern and sustain them—as a father hath over his children, a master over his servants, and a lord over his tenants—the which men have also received of our Lord gifts of grace and of devotion, and in part savour of ghostly occupation. Unto these men also belongeth mixed life that is both active and contemplative.

For, if these men, notwithstanding† the charge and the bond which they have taken, will leave utterly the business of the world (the which oweth‡ skilfully§ for to be used in fulfilling of their charge) and wholly give them to contemplative life, they do not well, for they keep not the order of charity. For charity, as thou knowest well, lieth both in love of God and of thine even-Christians. And therefore it is reasonable that he that hath charity use both in working, now the one and now the other. For he that for the love of God in contemplation leaveth the love of his even-Christians, and doeth not to them as he ought when he is bounden thereto, he fulfilleth not charity. Also, on

* MS. "avere." The printed edition of 1517 reads "faver."

† *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 reads "standing in," and the printed edition of 1494 reads "understanding."

‡ Ought. § Reasonably, naturally.

the contrariwise, whoso hath more regard to works of active life and to business of the world, that for the love of his even-Christians he leaveth ghostly occupation utterly after that God disposeth him thereto, he fulfilleth not fully charity. This is the saying of Gregory.* †Therefore our Lord, for to

* *Neque enim perfectus praedicator est, qui vel propter contemplationis studium operanda negligit, vel propter operationis instantiam contemplanda postponit. Hinc est enim quod Abraham coniugem mortuam in sepulcro duplici sepelit* (*Genes.* xxiii 19)*; quia nimirum perfectus quisque praedicator exstinctam a praesentis vitae desideriis animam suam, sub bonae operationis tegmine et contemplationis abscondit, ut a carnali concupiscentia sub activa contemplativaque vita quasi insensibilis lateat, quae prius mundi desideria sentiens, mortaliter vivebat. Hinc est quod humani generis Redemptor per diem miracula in urbibus exhibet, et ad orationis studium in monte pernoctat, ut perfectis videlicet praedicatoribus innuat quatenus nec activam vitam amore speculationis funditus deserant, nec contemplationis gaudia penitus operationis nimietate contemnant ; sed quieti contemplantes sorbeant, quod occupati erga proximos loquentes refundant. Speculando quippe in Dei amorem surgitur, sed praedicando ad proximi utilitatem reditur. Unde apud Moysen, dum in sacrificio vacca mactatur* (*Num.* xix 3) *offerri cum hyssopo lignoque cedrino bis tinctus coccus praecipitur. Vaccam quippe mactamus, cum carnem a lascivia suae voluptatis exstinguimus. Quam cum hyssopo lignoque cedrino ac cocco offerimus ; quia cum maceratione carnis, sacrificium fidei, spei et charitatis adolemus. Hyssopus quippe interna nostra mundare consuevit. Et per Petrum dicitur : Fide mundans corda eorum* (*Act.* xv 9). *Lignum cedrinum nulla*

stir some to use this mixed life, took upon himself the person of such manner of men—both of prelates of Holy Church and others such as are disposed as I have said—and gave them ensample by his own working that they should use this mixed life as he did. One time he communed with men and mixed with men, shewing to them his deeds of mercy; for he taught the uncouth* and uncunning† by his preaching, he visited the sick and healed them of their sores, he fed

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putredine deficit, quia spem coelestium terminus non consumit. Unde et per Petrum dicitur: Regeneravit nos in spem vivam per resurrectionem Jesu Christi ex mortuis, in haereditatem incorruptibilem, et incontaminatam, et immarcescibilem (1 *Pet.* i 3). *Coccus rubeo colore flammescit, quia quem implet charitas incendit. Unde et in Evangelio Veritas dicit: Ignem veni mittere in terram* (*Luc.* xii 49). *Sed bis tinctus coccus offerri praecipitur, ut videlicet ante interni iudicis oculos charitas nostra Dei et proximi dilectione coloretur; quatenus conversa mens nec sic pro amore Dei quietem diligat, ut curam proximi utilitatemque postponat; nec sic pro amore proximi occupata inserviat, ut quietem funditus deserens, ignem in se superni amoris exstinguat. Quisquis ergo semetipsum Deo iam sacrificium obtulit, si perfecta desiderat, curet necesse est, ut non solum ad operationis se latitudinem, verum etiam ad culmina contemplationis extenuat.*" (*Moral. Lib.* VI *in Caput* V, *B. Job*, 56.)

† Here begins ch. v in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

* Unlearned. † Ignorant.

the hungry, and he comforted the sorry.* And another time he left the conversation of all worldly men and of his disciples, and *went into the desert upon the hills, and continued all the night in prayers alone* as the gospel saith.† This mixed life shewed our Lord to ensample of all others that have taken the charge‡ of this mixed life: that they should one time give them to business of worldly things at reasonable need, and to the works of active life in profit of their even-Christians which they have cure of, and another time give them wholly to devotion and to contemplation in prayers and in meditation.

* Distressed, sad, full of grief.
† *Luc.* vi 12. ‡ Duty, responsibility.

CHAPTER VI

HOW HOLY BISHOPS USED MIXED LIFE

*This life led and used these holy bishops before, which had cure of men's souls and ministration of temporal goods. For these holy men left not utterly the ministration, and the looking and the spending of worldly goods, nor gave them wholly to contemplation—as much grace of contemplation as they had; but they left full often their own rest in contemplation, when they had full liefer† have been still thereat, for love of their even-Christians, and intermeddled them with worldly business in helping of their subjects, and soothly that was charity. For wisely and discreetly they departed their living in two. One time they fulfilled the lower part of charity by works of active life; for they were bounden thereto by taking of their prelacies. And another they fulfilled the higher part of charity, in contemplation of God and of ghostly things by

* Here begin ch. iii in *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397, ch. v in *B. M. Royal MS.* 17 C xviii and in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. vi in the printed editions of 1517 and 1532.

† Rather.

prayers and meditations. And so they had charity to God and to their even-Christians, both in affection of soul within, and also with shewing of bodily deeds without. Other men that were only contemplative and were free from all such cures and prelacy, they had full charity to God and to their even-Christians; but it was only in affection of their soul and not ever in outward shewing. And in hap so much it was the more full inward that [it was not letted by outward deeds; for]* they might not, nor it needed not, nor it fell not to them. † But these ‡ men that were in prelacy, and others also that were wholly temporal men, had full charity in affection within and also in working without. And that is properly mixed life that is made both of active and of contemplative life.

And, soothly, for such a man that is in spiritual sovereignty, as [prelacy in cure, government of others (as)]§ prelates and curates

* Omitted from *B. M. Harl.* 2397 and *Royal* 17 C xviii *MSS.* and from the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525, 1531 and 1533. In *Lambeth MS.* 472 this is an insertion.

† Here begins ch. vi in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

‡ Here begins the text of the *Linc. Cath. Thornton MS.*

§ In Lambeth *MS.* 472 this is an insertion.

be), or in temporal sovereignty (as worldly lords and masters are), I hold this life meddled* best and most behoveful to them as long as they are bounden thereto. But to others that are free and not bounden to temporal administration nor to spiritual, I believe that life contemplative alone (if they might come thereto soothfastly) were best, most speedful, most meedful,† most fair, most worthy of them for to use and for to hold, and not for to leave it wilfully for none outward working of active life, unless it were in great need—as great relieving and comforting of other men, either of their bodies or of their souls. And then (if need ask it at the prayer and instance of others, or else at the bidding of their sovereign) I believe it be good for them for to show outward works of active life for a time, in helping of their even-Christians.

* Mixed. † Meritorious.

CHAPTER VII

WHAT LIFE ACCORDETH MOST TO HIM THAT THIS WAS WRITTEN FOR

*By this that I have said thou mayest plainly understand which is one life and which is other, and which accordeth most† to thy state in living. And, soothly, as methinketh,‡ this mixed life accordeth most to thee, sithen§ our Lord hath ordained thee and set thee in the state of sovereignty over other men as much as it is, and lent thee abundance of worldly goods for to rule and sustain specially all these that are under thy government and thy lordship, of thy might‖ and cunning¶ and also withal that thou hast received grace (of the mercy of our Lord) for to know thyself, and ghostly desire and savour of his love, I believe that this life

* Here begin ch. iv in *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397, ch. vi in *B. M. Royal MS.* 17 C xviii and in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. vii in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed editions of 1494, 1517 and 1531.

† Is most suitable or proper.

‡ As seemeth to me.

§ Since.

‖ Power.

¶ Knowledge.

that is mixed is the best and accordeth most to thee [for to travail in. And therefore]* depart wisely thy living [in two, one time to one, another time to the other.]† For, wit thou well, if thou leave needful business of active life, and be reckless,‡ and take no keep§ of thy worldly goods how they are spent and kept, nor have no force‖ of thy subjects and of thine even-Christians, because of will and desire that thou hast only for to give thee to ghostly occupation, weening¶ that thou art by that excused—if thou do so, thou doest not wisely.

* Omitted from *B. M. Harl.* 2397 and *Royal* 17 C xviii *MSS.* and from the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, which read "and that for to."

† Omitted from *B. M. Harl.* 2397 and *Royal* 17 C xviii *MSS.* and from the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533. In *Lambeth MS.* 472 the entire sentence has been corrected.

‡ Careless, negligent.

§ Take no heed.

‖ Care.

¶ Thinking.

CHAPTER VIII

A MAN THAT HATH SOVEREIGNTY SHALL NOT UTTERLY GIVE HIM TO DEVOTION* AND LEAVE WORLDLY BUSINESS

†WHAT are all thy works worth, whether they be bodily or ghostly, unless they be done righteously and reasonably to the worship of God and at his bidding? Soothly, right nought. ‡Then, if thou leave that thing that thou art bounden to by way of charity, of right, and of reason, and wilt wholly give thee to another thing wilfully—as it were to more pleasure of God—which thou art not fully bounden to, thou doest no worship discreetly to him. Thou art busy to worship his head and his face and array it fair and curiously;§ but thou leavest his body [his arms and his feet all] ‖ ragged and

* *Lambeth MS.* 472 reads "deueuecioun": this is probably a scribe's error.

† Here begins ch. vii in *B. M. Royal MS.* 17 C xviii.

‡ Here begins ch. viii in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

§ With careful art, skilfully, elaborately.

‖ Omitted from *B. M. Royal MS.* 17 C xviii, *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 and the printed editions of

rent, and takest no keep thereof, and there thou worshippest him not. For it is villainy* [and no worship]† to a man to be curiously arrayed upon his head with perre‡ and precious stones, and all his body be naked and bare as it were a beggar. Right so ghostly, it is no worship to God to crown§ his head and leave his body bare.

Thou shalt understand that our Lord Jesu Christ as Man is head of all the ghostly body which is Holy Church. The members of this body are all Christian men: some are arms and some are feet, and some are other members after sundry workings that they use their in living.‖ Then, if that thou be busy with all thy working in thy might for to array his head—that is, for to worship

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1507, 1517, 1519, 1525, and 1533, which read "with the feet." *Lambeth MS.* 472 omits "all" and has been corrected.

* Ill-usage, injury, indignity, insult.

† Omitted from the *Bodleian Vernon*, *B. M. Add.* 22283, *B. M. Harl.* 2254, and *Linc. Cath. Thornton MSS.*, and from the printed edition of 1494.

‡ Perrie, perry (O. F. pierrie, pierie, syncopated form of pierrerie, O. F. perrerie, *f.* pierre [stone] + erie): precious stones or gems.

§ The *Bodleian Vernon*, *B. M. Add.* 22283, *B. M. Harl.* 2254, and *Linc. Cath. Thornton MSS.*, and the printed edition of 1494 read "cover."

‖ *Cf. The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. xxv, p. 71: "For Christ is our head, and we be the limbs, if we be in charity."

himself by mind of his Passion and of his other works in his manhood by devotion and meditation of him—and forgettest his feet that are thy children and thy servants, thy tenants and all thine even-Christians, [and lettest them]* spill† for default of keeping, unarrayed, unkept and not tended to as they ought for to be, thou pleasest him not, thou doest no worship to him. Thou makest thee for to kiss his mouth by devotion and ghostly prayer; but thou treadest upon his feet and defilest them, inasmuch as thou wilt not tend to them (for negligence of thyself) which thou hast taken the cure of. Thus thinketh me. Nevertheless, if thou think that it is not sooth,‡ for it were a fairer office to worship the head of him (as for to be all day occupied in the meditation of his manhood) than for to go lower to other works and make clean his feet (as for to be busy both in thought§ and in deed about the help of

* Inserted from the *Bodleian Vernon, B. M. Add.* 22283 and *Linc. Cath. Thornton MSS.* and from the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533. † Perish. ‡ True.

§ Reading of *Bodleian Vernon, B. M. Add.* 22283 and *Harl.* 2254, and *Linc. Cath. Thornton MSS.* and of the printed edition of 1494. *Lambeth* 472, *B. M. Harl.* 2397 and *B. M. Royal* 17 C xviii *MSS.* and the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533 read "word."

thine even-Christians in time) methinketh not so as unto thee. For, soothly, he will thee more thank for the meek washing of his feet when they are right foul and stink upon thee, than for all the precious painting and arraying that thou canst make about his head by mind of his manhood, for it is fair enough and needeth not to be arrayed of thee much. But his feet and his other members—that [are thy subjects and thine even-Christians—]* are sometimes evil arrayed, and had need to be looked after and holpen by thee (namely, sithen thou art bounden thereto) and for them will he thee more thank, if thou wilt meekly and tenderly look to them.†

For the more low service that thou hast to thy Lord for love of him or to any of his members when need and righteousness asketh it, with a glad, meek heart, the more pleasest thou him, thinking that it were enough to thee for to be at the least degree and lowest state sithen it is his will that

* Omitted from *B. M. Harl.* 2397 and *Royal* 17 C xviii MSS. and from the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533. In *Lambeth MS.* 472 this has been corrected.

† Miss Underhill, in a note to p. xxv of the Introduction to her edition of *The Scale of Perfection*, states that this image is taken from St Augustine's Commentary on the First Epistle fo St John.

it be so. For it seemeth to me, sithen he hath put thee in that state for to travail and serve other men, that it is his will that thou shouldest fulfil it with thy might. *This ensample I say to thee, not for thou doest not thus as I say (for I believe that thou dost thus and better), but I would that thou shouldst do thus gladly, and not think loath for to leave sometimes ghostly occupation and intermeddle thee with worldly business, in wise keeping and spending of thy worldly goods, in good ruling of thy servants and thy tenants, and in other good works working for all thine even-Christians of thy might. But, that thou shouldest do both works in divers times and with as good will the one as the other (if thou might) as if thou hadst prayed and been occupied ghostly, thou shalt after certain time break off that, and then shalt thou busily and gladly occupy thee in some bodily occupation for thine even-Christians. Also, when thou hast been busy outward awhile with thy servants or with other men profitably, thou shalt break off and turn again to thy prayers and thy devotions after God giveth thee grace. And so shalt thou put away by grace of our Lord sloth, idleness, and vain rest

* Here begins ch. ix in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

that cometh of thy flesh under colour of contemplation and letteth thee sometimes from meedful and speedful occupation in outward business, and thou shalt be aye well occupied either bodily or ghostly. *And, therefore, if thou wilt do well, thou shalt do ghostly as Jacob did bodily.

* Here begins ch. x in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

CHAPTER IX

HOW THAT WHEN A MAN IS WELL TRAVAILED AND PROVED IN DEEDS OF ACTIVE LIFE HE MAY PASS FORTH AND ATTAIN TO CONTEMPLATION, WHICH IS FIGURED BY JACOB'S WIVES RACHEL AND LIA

*HOLY Writ saith that Jacob, when he began to serve his master Laban, he coveted Rachel his master's daughter to his wife for her fairness, and for her he served; but, when he weened† for to have had her to his wife, he took first Lia the other daughter in the stead of Rachel, and afterward he took Rachel, and so he had both at the last.‡

By Jacob in Holy Writ is understood an overgoer§ of sins. By these two women are understood, as St Gregory saith,‖ two lives in Holy Church, active life and contem-

* Here begin ch. v in *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397, and ch. viii in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

† Thought.

‡ *Gen.* xxix and xxx.

§ Forsaker.

‖ St Augustine and St Gregory are the sources from which Hilton takes his interpretation of this episode in the life of Jacob (see *Western Mysticism*, pp. 197-200 and pp. 215-216).

plative life. Lia is as much for to say as travailous* and betokeneth active life.

Rachel is as much for to say as sight of beginning that is God, and betokeneth life contemplative. Lia was fruitful, but she was sore-eyed: Rachel was fair and lovely, but she was barren. Then, right as Jacob coveted Rachel for her fairness, and nevertheless he had her not when he would, but first he took Lia and afterward her sister; right so every man turned by grace of compunction, soothfastly, from sins of the world and of the flesh unto the service of God and cleanness of good living hath great desire and great longing for to have Rachel: that is, for to have rest in ghostly sweetness in devotion and contemplation, for it is so fair and so lovely, and in hope for to have that life only he disposeth him for to serve our Lord with all his might. But often when he weened for to have had Rachel (that is rest in devotion) our Lord suffereth him first to be assayed well and travailed with Lia (that is, either with temptations of the world, or else of the devil, or else with other worldly business bodily or ghostly, in helping of his even-Christians). And when he is well travailed with Lia and nearly overcome, then our Lord giveth him Rachel (that is grace of devotion and rest in

* Laborious.

conscience) and then hath he both Rachel and Lia.

So shalt thou do after the ensample of Jacob: take these two lives, active and contemplative, sithen God hath sent thee both, and use them both the one with the other. By that one life shalt thou bring forth fruit of many good deeds in help of thine even-Christians: and that is by active life. And by that other thou shalt be made fair, clean and bright in beholding* the sovereign brightness that is God, beginner and ender of all that is made; and then shalt thou be soothfastly Jacob and overgoer and overcomer of all sins. And after this by grace of God thy name shall be changed, as Jacob's name was, and turned into Israel. Israel is as much for to say as a man seeing God. Then, if thou be first Jacob and discreetly wilt use these two lives in time, thou shalt after be Israel (that is very contemplative) either in this life if he will deliver thee and make thee free from charges and businesses the which thou art bounden to, or else after this life full in the bliss of heaven when thou comest thither.

* Omitted from *Lambeth* 472 and *B. M. Harl.* 2397 and *Royal* 17 C xviii *MSS.* and from the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533.

CHAPTER X

THAT A MAN SHALL DESIRE LIFE CONTEMPLATIVE

*Life contemplative is fair and meedful, and therefore thou shalt aye have it in thy mind and in thy desire; but thou shalt have in using life active, for it is so needful and so speedful. Therefore, if thou be put from rest in devotion when thou wert liefest be still thereat—either by thy children, or thy servants, or by any of thine even-Christians for their profit or ease of their hearts skilfully asked—be not angry with them, nor heavy, nor dreadful,† as if God would be wroth with thee that thou leavest him for any other thing; for it is not sooth. But leave off lightly thy devotion, whether it be in prayer or in meditation, and go do thy debt and thy service to thine even-Christians as readily as our Lord himself bade thee do so: and suffer meekly for his love without grudging‡

* Here begins ch. xi in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

† Fearful.

‡ Complaining.

(if thou may do) both disease* and troubling† of thine heart because of meddling with such business.

* Uneasiness.

† The *Bodleian Vernon MS.* reads " and disease and troubling," *cf.*, L. *et . . . et.*

CHAPTER XI

THAT A MAN SHALL SOMETIMES HAVE MORE DEVOTION WHEN HE HATH BEEN LETTED BY OUTWARD WORKS

*For it may fall sometimes that the more troubled that thou hast been outwardly with active works, the more burning desire thou shalt have to God, and the more clear sight of ghostly things by grace of our Lord in devotion when thou comest thereto. For it fareth hereby as if thou had a little coal and thou would make a fire therewith and make it to burn. Thou wouldest first lay thereto sticks and cover the coal with the sticks. [And though it seem for a time that thou shouldest slake the coal with the sticks,]† nevertheless, when thou hast abiden awhile and afterward blowest a little, anon shall

* Here begin ch. xii in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494, ch. viii in *B. M. Royal MS.* 17 C xviii, ch. vii in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. ix in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

† Omitted from *Lambeth* 472, *B. M. Harl.* 2397 and *Royal* 17 C xviii *MSS.* and from the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533.

spring out a green flame of fire, for the sticks are turned all to fire. Right so is ghostly the will and the desire that thou hast to God. It is as it were a little coal of fire in thy soul, for it giveth to thee somewhat of light and of ghostly heat; but it is full little, for oft it waxeth cold and turneth to fleshly rest, and sometimes to idleness. Therefore it is good that thou put thereto sticks, that are good works of active life.* And though it be so that these works, as it seemeth, for a time let thy desire that it may not be so clean nor so fervent as thou wouldest, be not too dreadful therefore; but abide and suffer awhile, and so blow at the fire. That is, first go do thy works, and go then alone to thy prayers and to thy meditations, and lift up thine heart to God, and pray him of his goodness that he will accept thy works that thou doest to his pleasure.

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xxi, p. 250: "For it fareth by works and by desire, as it doth by sticks and by a fire. For the more sticks are laid to the fire, the greater is the fire; right so the more divers ghostly working that a man hath in his thought to keep whole his desire, the mightier and more burning shall his desire be to God. And therefore look wisely what work thou canst best do, and that most helpeth thee to save whole this desire to Jesus, if thou be free, and art not bound save by the common law; and do that."

*Hold thy works† then as nought in thine own sight, but only at the mercy of him. Acknowledge meekly thy wretchedness and thy frailty, and ascribe soothfastly thy good deeds all to him inasmuch as they are good: and inasmuch as they are bad, and not done discreetly with all circumstances that are needful for a good deed, for default of‡ discretion, put them to thyself. And then for this meekness shall all thy good deeds turn into a flame of fire as sticks laid upon a coal, and then shall thy good deeds outward not hinder thy devotion but rather make it more.

Our Lord saith in Holy Writ thus: *Ignis in altari meo semper ardebit, et sacerdos surgens mane subiciet§ ligna ut ignis non extinguatur*— "Fire shall burn aye in my altar, and the priest rising at morn shall put under sticks that it be not quenched."‖ (This fire is love and desire to God in a soul, [which love needeth]¶

* Here begins ch. xiii in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

† *Lambeth* 472 and *B. M. Harl.* 2397 *MSS.* read "Hold thee," and the printed edition of 1517 reads "And hold thee."

‡ Through the want of.

§ *Lambeth MS.* 472 reads *subiciens*.

‖ *Lev.* vi 12-13.

¶ *Lambeth* 472 and *B. M. Harl.* 2397, and *Royal* 17 C xviii *MSS.* and the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533 read "which loveth."

for to be nourished and kept by laying to fire and sticks, that it go not out.)* These sticks are of diverse matters: some are of one tree and some of another. A man that is lettered and hath understanding of Holy Writ, if he have this fire of devotion in his heart, it is good unto him for to get him sticks of holy ensamples and sayings of our Lord by reading in Holy Writ and nourish the fire with them. Another man unlettered may not so readily have at his hand Holy Writ nor doctors' sayings, and therefore it needeth unto him for to do many good deeds outwardly to his even-Christians, and kindle the fire of love with them. And so it is good that each man in his degree do after that he is disposed: that he get him sticks of one thing or of another—either of prayers, or of good meditations, or reading in Holy Writ, or good bodily working —for to nourish the fire of love in his soul, so that it be not quenched.† For the

* Omitted from *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2254.

† *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. xxxii, p. 54: " Of this manner of prayer speaketh our Lord in Holy Writ by figure thus: *The fire of love shall ever be lit* in the soul of a devout and clean man or woman, the which is the altar of our Lord, *and the priest shall every day at morn lay to sticks* and nourish the fire. That is to say this man shall by holy psalms, clean thoughts, and fervent desire nourish the fire of love in his heart, *that it go not out at any time*."

affection of love is tender and lightly will vanish away unless it be well kept and by good deeds bodily or ghostly continually nourished.*

* Here ends the text of *B. M. Royal MS.* 17 C xviii.

CHAPTER XII

HOW GOD QUICKENETH A MAN'S DESIRE TO HOLY WORKS

*Now then, sithen our Lord hath sent into thine heart a little sparkle of this blessed fire —that is himself, as Holy Writ saith, *Deus noster ignis consumens est:* that is, "Our Lord God is fire wasting"† (for, as bodily fire wasteth all bodily things that may be wasted; right so ghostly fire, that is God himself, wasteth all manner of sin whereso it falleth, and therefore our Lord is likened to fire wasting)—I pray thee‡ nourish this fire.§

* Here begin ch. xiv in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494, ch. vi in *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397, and a division in *B. M. Harl.* 2254 and *Linc. Cath. Thornton MSS.*

† *Deut.* iv 24, and *Heb.* xii 29.

‡ The *Linc. Cath. Thornton MS.* reads "I pray thee heartily, dear sister."

§ *Cf. The Scale of Perfection,* Bk. II, ch. xxxiii, p. 315: "On the same wise it is said that God is fire: *Our Lord is fire wasting.* That is for to say, God is not fire elementary, that heateth the body and burneth it, but God is love and charity. For as fire wasteth all bodily thing that may be wasted, right so the love of God burneth and wasteth all sin out of the soul and maketh it clean, as fire maketh clean all manner metal."

This fire is nought else but love and charity. This hath he sent into the earth, as he saith in the gospel, *Ignem veni mittere in terram et ad quod nisi ut ardeat :* " I am come to send fire into the earth, and whereto but that it should burn ?"* That is, God hath sent fire of love of good desire and great will for to please him into man's soul, and unto this end: that a man shall know it, keep it, and nourish it, and strengthen it, and be saved thereby. The more desire that thou hast to him and for him, the more is the fire of love in thee; and the less that this desire is in thee, the less is the fire.† The measure of this desire, how much it is, neither in thyself nor in none other, knowest thou not, nor no man of himself, but God only that giveth it. And therefore dispute not with thyself as if thou wouldest know how much thy desire is. Be thou busy for to desire as much as thou may, but not for to wit the measure of thy desire.

* *Luc.* xii 49.

† *Cf. The Scale of Perfection,* Bk. I, ch. xii, p. 19: " The knitting and the fastening of Jesus to a man's soul is by goodwill and great desire to him only, to have him and see him in his bliss ghostly. The more that this desire is, the faster is Jesus knit to the soul: the less that this desire is, the looselier is he knit."

CHAPTER XIII

WHAT IS DESIRE TO GOD FOR HIMSELF

*ST AUSTIN saith that the life of each good Christian man is a continual desire to God;† and that is of great virtue, for it is a great crying in the ears of God. The more thou desirest, the higher thou criest, the better thou prayest, the wiselier thou thinkest.

‡And what is this desire? Soothly, but a loathing of all this world's bliss, of this fleshly liking in thine heart, and a wonderful longing with a trustful yearning for endless bliss and heavenly desire and joy. This thinketh me may be called a desire to God for himself. If thou have this desire, as I believe securely that thou hast, I pray thee

* Here begin ch. viii in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. x in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

† *Tota vita christiani boni, sanctum desiderium est* (*In Epistolam Joannis ad Parthos, Tract.* IV, *Caput* ii 6). This passage is quoted also in *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. lxxv, p. 175. *Cf. Qui Habitat*, ch. xiv, p. 163, below.

‡ Here begins ch. xv in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

keep it well and nourish it wisely. And, when thou shalt pray or think, make this desire beginning and end of all thy work for to increase it. Look after none other feeling in thy bodily wits, nor seek after none other bodily sweetness—neither sounding, nor savouring, nor wonderful light, nor angels' sight: nor, though our Lord himself as unto thy sight would appear bodily to thee, charge it but a little*—but that all thy business be that thou might feel soothfastly in thy thought a loathing and a full forsaking of all manner of sin and of all manner of uncleanness, with a ghostly sight of it, how foul, how ugly, and how painful it is:† and that thou have a mighty desire to virtues, to meekness, to charity, and to the bliss of heaven. This thinketh me were ghostly comfort and ghostly sweetness in man's soul: as for to have cleanness in conscience from wickedness of all worldly vanity, with stable troth, meek hope, and full desire to God, ‡howsoever it be of other comforts and sweetnesses.

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. xi.

† *Cf. Bonum Est*, ch. i, p. 172, below.

‡ Here begins a division in *B. M. Harl.* 2254 and *Linc. Cath. Thornton MSS.*

CHAPTER XIV

IN CLEANNESS OF CONSCIENCE IS VERY COMFORT AND SWEETNESS

*METHINKETH that sweetness is secure and soothfast that is felt in cleanness of conscience by mighty forsaking and loathing of all sin, and with inward sight with fervent desire of ghostly things. All other comforts and sweetnesses or any other manner of feeling, unless they help and lead to this end (that is, to cleanness of conscience and ghostly desire to God), are not secure to rest in.

†But now askest thou whether this desire be love to God? As unto this I say that this desire is not properly love, but it is a beginning and a tasting of love. For love properly is a full coupling of the lover and the loved together, as God and a soul into one.‡

* Here begins ch. xi in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

† Here begins ch. xvi in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

‡ For style *cf. Benedictus*, p. 230, below: "For death properly is nought else but a full departing from the blessed life (that is, God) without hope of again coming thereto."

This coupling may not be fully had in this life, but only in desire and longing thereto, as by this ensample. As, if a man love another man which is absent, he desireth greatly his presence for to have the use of his love and his liking. Right so ghostly, as long as we are in this life our Lord is absent from us that we may neither see him, nor hear him, nor feel as he is. And therefore we may not have the use of his full love here in full liking; but we may have a desire and a great yearning for to be present with him for to see him in his bliss, and fully for to be oned* to him in love. This desire may we have of his gift in this life, by the which we shall be safe,† for it is love unto him as it may be had here. Thus saith St Paul: *Scientes quoniam dum sumus in hoc corpore peregrinamur a domino, per fidem enim ambulamus et non per speciem; audemus autem et bonam voluntatem habemus magis peregrinari a corpore et praesentes esse ad deum, et ideo contendimus sive absentes sive praesentes placere illi.* St Paul saith: "That as long as we are in this body we are pilgrims from our Lord." That is, we are absent from heaven in this exile. "We go by troth, not by sight." That is, we live in troth, not in bodily feeling. "We dare and have good will to be absent from the

* United. † Saved.

body and be present to God." That is, we, for cleanness in conscience and secure troth of salvation, dare desire parting from our body by bodily death and presence to our Lord. "Nevertheless, for we may not yet, therefore we strive, whether we be absent or present, for to please him." That is, we strive against sins of the world and liking of the flesh by desire to him, for to burn in this desire all things that let* us from him.†

‡But yet askest thou me, may a man have this desire in his heart continually? Methinketh nay. As unto this I may say as methinketh: that this desire may be had as to virtue and profit of it in habit continually, but not in working nor in using, as by this ensample: if thou were sick and thou should have, as each man hath, a kindly§ desire of bodily health continually in thine heart whatever thou did, whether thou sleep or thou wake, but not aye alike; for if thou sleep, or else wake and think on some worldly thing, then thou hast this desire in habit only and not in working, but when thou thinkest on thy sickness and of thy bodily

* Hinder. † 2 *Cor.* v 6-9.

‡ Here begin ch. vii in *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397, and ch. xvii in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

§ Natural.

health, then hast thou it in using. Right so it is ghostly of desire to God. He that hath this desire of gift of God, if he sleep or else think not on God but on worldly things, yet he hath this desire in habit of his soul until he sin deadly. But anon, as he thinketh on God, or on cleanness of living, or of the joys of heaven, then worketh his desire to God as long as he keepeth his thought and his intent to please God, either in prayer or in meditation, or in any other good deed of active life. Then is it good that all our business be for to stir this desire to use it by discretion, now in one deed, now in another, after we are disposed and have grace thereto. This desire is root of all thy working, if it be meedful; for, wit thou well, what good deed that thou dost for God bodily or ghostly, it is an using of this desire.

CHAPTER XV

WHEN THOU PRAYEST OR THINKEST, DOUBT NOT THEN IF THOU DESIREST GOD

And therefore when thou doest a good deed, or prayest, or thinkest on God, think not in thine heart, doubting whether thou desirest or not; for thy deed sheweth thy desire. Some are uncunning and ween that they desire not God, unless they be ever crying on God with words of their mouth, or else in their heart [by desiring words]*—as if they said thus, "Ah Lord, bring me to thy bliss; Lord, make me safe;" or else such other. These words are good, whether they be said with mouth or formed in the heart; for they stir a man's heart to desiring of God. But, nevertheless, without any such words, a clean thought of God, or of any ghostly thing—as of virtues or of the manhood of Christ, or of the joys of heaven, or of understanding of Holy Writ with love—may be better than such words. For a clean thought of God is soothfast desire to

* Omitted from *Lambeth* 472 and *B. M. Harl.* 2397 *MSS.* and from the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533.

him: and the more ghostly that the thought is, the more is the desire. And therefore be thou not in doubt nor in dwere* when thou prayest or thinkest on God, or else when thou doest other outward good deeds to thine even-Christians whether thou desirest him or not; for thy deeds sh-ow it.

Nevertheless, though it be so that all thy good deeds bodily and ghostly are a shewing of thy desire to God, yet is there a diversity between ghostly and bodily deeds. For deeds of contemplative life are properly and kindly the working of this desire; but outward deeds are not so. And, therefore, when thou prayest or thinkest on God, thy desire to God is more whole, more fervent, and more ghostly, than when thou doest other [outward good]† deeds unto thine even-Christians.

* Doubt, dread.
† In *Lambeth MS.* 472 only.

CHAPTER XVI

GHOSTLY DEEDS ARE PROPERLY OF LOVE AND NOT BODILY

*Now, if thou ask how thou shalt keep this desire and nourish it, a little shall I tell thee: not that thou shalt use the same form alway that I say, but that thou should have thereby, if need be, some warning and wissing† for to rule thee in thine occupation. For I may not, nor I cannot tell thee fully what is best to thee for to use; but I shall say somewhat to thee as methinketh.

* Here begins ch. xviii in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494, and a division in *Linc. Cath. Thornton MS.*

† Instruction, direction.

CHAPTER XVII

HOW THOU SHALT DISPOSE THEE TO DEVOTION BY THOUGHT OR PRAYER

*In nights after thy sleep, if thou wilt rise for to pray and serve thy Lord, thou shalt feel thyself first fleshly heavy and sometimes lusty.† Then shalt thou dispose thee for to pray or for to think some good thought for to quicken thine heart to God, and set all thy business first for to draw up thy thought from worldly vanities and from vain imaginations that fall into thy mind, that thou may feel some devotion in thy saying.‡ Or else,

* Here begin ch. ix in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. xii in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

† Lustful, cheerful, lively.

‡ *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. xxv, pp. 43-44: "when thou art wakened of thy sleep, and ready to pray, thou shalt feel thyself fleshly and heavy; ever downward drawn to vain thought either of dreams or fantasies or of unskilful business of the world and of thy flesh. Then it behoveth thee to quicken thine heart by prayer, and stir it as much as thou mayest to some devotion. And in thy prayer thou shalt not set thine heart in any bodily thing, but all thy travail shall be to draw in thy thought from beholding of all earthly things

if thou will think on ghostly things, that thou be not letted by such vain thoughts of the world or of the flesh in thy thinkings, there are many manner of thinkings*: which are best for thee can I not say. But I believe that that thought by which thou feelest savour and most rest for the time is best for thee. †Thou may, if thou will, sometimes think on thy sins before done, and of thy frailties that thou fallest in each day, and ask mercy and forgiveness for them. Also, after this thou mayest think of the frailties, the sins, and the wretchednesses of thine even-Christians, bodily and ghostly, with pity and compassion of them. And cry mercy and forgiveness for them as tenderly as for thyself, and as they were thine own. And that is a good thought. For I tell thee, forsooth, thou mayest make of other men's sins a precious ointment for to heal thine own soul, when thou hast mind‡ of them with compassion and sorrow for them.

that thy desire may be as it were naked and bare from all earthly things, ever upward stying unto Jesus Christ."

* *Lambeth MS.* 472 reads "things."

† Here begins ch. xix in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

‡ Remembrance.

CHAPTER XVIII

THAT THE MIND OF OTHER MEN'S SINS WITH COMPASSION IS TREACLE

THIS ointment is precious, though the spicery be not clean, for it is made of venom* for to destroy venom. That is for to say, thine own sins and other men's also, brought into thy mind, if thou beat them well with sorrow of [thy heart],† pity and compassion, they turn into treacle‡ which maketh thy soul whole from pride and envy and bringeth in love and charity to thine even-Christians. This thought is good sometimes for to have.

* Poison.

† Omitted from *Lambeth MS.* 472.

‡ *Old Pharm.*, a medicinal compound; originally a kind of salve composed of many ingredients, formerly in repute as an alexipharmic against and antidote to venomous bites, poisons generally, and malignant diseases. Gr. θηριακή antidote against a venomous bite. The flesh of the viper was formerly held to be a necessary ingredient of the antidote to its bite. (New English Dictionary.)

CHAPTER XIX

HOW A MAN SHALL HAVE MIND OF THE PASSION OF CHRIST

*ALSO thou mayest have mind of the manhood of our Lord in his birth and in his passion, or in any of his works, and feed thy thought with ghostly imaginations of it, for to stir thine affections more to the love of him. This thought is good and speedful, namely, when it cometh freely of God's gift with devotion and fervour of the spirit: else a man may not lightly have savour nor devotion in it. I hold it not speedful to a man for to press then too much thereupon as if he would get it by mastery, for he may break his head and his body and he shall never be the nearer. Therefore methinketh unto thee it is good for to have in mind his manhood sometimes. And if devotion come withal and savour, keep it and follow it for

* Here begin ch. viii in *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397, ch. xx in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494, ch. x in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. xiii in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

a time; but leave off soon and hang not too long thereupon. Also, if devotion come not with mind of the Passion, strive not nor press not too much thereafter, and take easily that will come, and go forth to some other thought.*

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection,* Bk. II, ch. xxi, p. 249: "Now thou art in the way and knowest what the place is called whither thou shalt draw to. Begin then to go in thy journey. Thy forthgoing is nought else but ghostly working, and bodily also when need is; which thou shalt use by discretion upon this wise. What work that it be that thou should do after the degree and the state that thou standest in bodily or ghostly, if it help this gracious desire that thou hast to love Jesus, and make it more easy, more whole and more mighty to all virtues and to all goodness, that work hold I best; be it preaching, be it thinking, be it reading, be it working. And as long as that work strengtheneth most thy heart and thy will to the love of Jesus, and furthest draweth thine affection and thy thought from worldly vanity, it is good to use it. And if it be so that, through use, the savour of that work letteth, and thou thinkest that another work savoureth thee more, and thou feelest more grace in another, take another and leave that. For though thy desire and the yearning of thine heart to Jesus should be ever unchangeable, nevertheless thy ghostly works, that thou shalt use in praying or thinking to feed and nourish thy desire, may be divers and may well be changed after that thou feelest thee disposed through grace in applying of thine own heart."

CHAPTER XX

HOW A MAN SHALL THINK ON VIRTUES

*Also other thoughts there be that are more ghostly. As for to think on virtues and for to see by light of understanding the virtue of meekness, what it is, and how a man should be meek, and also what is patience, and cleanness, righteousness, charity, chastity and sobriety, and such others, and how a man should get all these virtues; and by such thoughts for to have great desire and longing to these virtues for to have them, and also for to have a ghostly sight of the three† principal virtues—as troth, hope, and charity. By the sight and the desire of these virtues a soul should be able to feel great comfort, if he had grace of our Lord: without which grace a man's thought is half blind, without savour or ghostly sweetness.

* Here begin ch. xxi in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494, ch. xi in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. xiv in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

† Inserted from the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.*

CHAPTER XXI

THE MIND OF SAINTS

*Also for to think on saints of our Lord, as on apostles, martyrs, confessors, and holy virgins: behold inwardly the holy living, the grace, and the virtues that our Lord gave them here living. And by this mind stir thine own heart to take ensample of them unto better living.

* Here begins ch. xxii in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

CHAPTER XXII

THE MIND OF OUR LADY ST MARY

*Also the mind of our Lady St Mary above all other saints: for to see by ghostly eye the abundance of grace in her holy soul when she was here living, that our Lord gave her alone, passing all creatures. For in her was fullness of all virtues without weem† of sin, shewing full meekness and perfect charity, and fully with these the beauty of all other virtues, so wholly [and fully]‡ that there might no stirring of pride, nor envy, nor wrath, nor fleshly liking, nor of no manner of sin, enter into her heart nor defile the soul in no part of it. By the beholding of the fairness of this blessed soul a man's heart should be greatly stirred into ghostly comfort.

* Here begin ch. xii in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. xv in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

† Stain.

‡ In *Lambeth MS.* 472 only, where the passage has been corrected.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE MIND OF OUR LORD IN HIS VIRTUES

AND much more than above this the thinking of the soul of our Lord Jesu, which was fully oned to the Godhead, passing without comparison our Lady and all other creatures. For in the person of Jesu are two kinds,* that is, God and Man, fully oned together. By the virtue of this blessed oneing, which may not be said nor conceived by man's wit, the soul of Jesu received the fullness of wisdom and love and all goodness. As the apostle saith: *Plenitudo divinitatis inhabitavit in ipso* †*corporaliter*. That is, the Godhead was oned fully to the manhood in the soul of Jesu, and so by the soul dwelled in the body.‡ The mind of the manhood of our Lord upon this wise (that is, for to behold the virtues and the overpassing§ grace of the soul of Jesu) should be comfortable‖ to a man's soul.

* Natures. † *Lambeth MS.* 472 reads *Christo*.
‡ *Col.* ii 9. The statement that the Godhead assumed human nature *mediante anima* must be taken in the sense explained by St Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, III, q. vi, art. i: "secundum gradum dignitatis . . . et . . . rationem causalitatis."
§ Surpassing. ‖ Full of consolation.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE MIND OF THE WISDOM AND THE GOODNESS OF GOD IN HIS CREATURES

*Also mind of the might, the wisdom, and the goodness of our Lord in his creatures. For, inasmuch as we may not see God fully in himself here living, therefore we should behold him, love him, dread him, and wonder at his might and his wisdom and his goodness in his works and in his creatures.

* Here begin ch. xiii in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. xvi in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

CHAPTER XXV

THE MIND AND THE MERCY OF OUR LORD IN HIS CREATURES

*Also for to think of the mercy of our Lord that he hath shewed to me and to thee, and to all sinful caitiffs† that have been encumbered in sin, spered‡ in the devil's prison. How our Lord patiently suffered us to live in our sin, and took no vengeance of us as he might have done rightfully and put us into hell, if his love had not letted him. But for love he spared us, he had pity on us, and sent§ his grace into our hearts and called us out of our sins; and by his grace hath turned our wills wholly to him and for to have him, and for his love forsake all manner of sin. The mind of his mercy and of his goodness, made with other circumstances more than I can or may

* Here begins ch. xxiii in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

† Captives, prisoners. L., *captivum*, a captive. O.N.F., *caitif*.

‡ Shut up, enclosed, confined.

§ *Lambeth MS.* 472 reads "sette."

rehearse now, bringeth into a soul great trust of our Lord and full hope of salvation, and kindleth the desire of love mightily to the joys of heaven.

CHAPTER XXVI

THE MIND OF THE WRETCHEDNESS AND PERILS OF THIS WORLD MAKETH THE SOUL TO DESIRE THE BLISS OF HEAVEN

*Also for to think of the wretchedness, the mischiefs, and the perils, bodily and ghostly, that fall in this life: and after that for to think of the joys of heaven, how much bliss there is and joy. For there is neither sin nor sorrow, nor passion nor pain, hunger nor thirst, sore nor sickness, doubt nor dread, shame nor disgrace,† nor default of might, nor lacking of light, nor wanting of will.

* Here begin ch. ix in *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397, ch. xxiv in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494, ch. xiv in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. xvii in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

† MS. schenschipe, which continues the alliteration.

CHAPTER XXVII

OF THE JOYS OF HEAVEN

But there is sovereign fairness, strength, health, liking aye lasting, wisdom, love, peace, worship, security, rest, joy, and bliss enough, aye without end. The more that thou thinkest and feelest the wretchedness of this life, the more fervently shalt thou desire the joy and the rest of the bliss of heaven.

CHAPTER XXVIII

COVETOUS MEN OF THIS WORLD ARE LIKE UNTO CHILDREN THAT RUN AFTER BUTTERFLIES

*MANY men are covetous of worldly worships† and earthly riches, [and think night and day dreaming and waking],‡ how and by what means they might come thereto. And therefore they forget the mind of themselves, the pains of hell, the joys of heaven. Soothly, they are not wise. They are like to children that run after butterflies, and for they look not to their feet they fall sometimes down and break their legs. What is all the pomp and the worship of this world in riches or in jollity§ but a butterfly? Soothly, nought else, and yet much less. Therefore, I pray thee, be thou covetous of the joys of

* Here begins ch. xxv in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

† Honours.

‡ *Lambeth MS.* 472 reads "dreaming and waking and think." *B. M. Harl.* 2397 reads "and they dreaming and waking cast." The printed edition of 1494 reads "and think in every dreaming and waking," and the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533 read "and think now dreaming now waking."

§ Merrymaking, festivity, revelry.

heaven, and thou shalt have worships and riches that ever shall last. For at the last end, when worldly covetous men bring no good in their hands, for all their worships and their riches are turned into nought save sorrow and pain, then shall heavenly covetous men that forsake truly all vain worships and riches of this world (or else, if they have riches and worships, they set not by them, nor their love nor their liking in them, but live aye in dread, and in meekness, and in hope, and in sorrow sometimes, and abide the mercy of God patiently) they shall then have fully that they here coveted; for they shall be crowned as kings and sty* up with our Lord Jesu into the bliss of heaven.

†Also there are many other meditations more than I can say, which that God putteth into man's mind for to stir the affections and the reason of a man's soul to loathe vanities of this world, and for to desire the joys of heaven. These words I say not to thee as I had fully shown the manners of meditation as they are wrought in a man's soul. But I touch them to thee a little that thou shouldest by this little understand the more.

* Ascend. The *Bodleian Vernon*, *B. M. Add.* 22283, *B. M. Harl.* 2254 and *Linc. Cath. Thornton MSS.* read "sit."

† Here begins ch. xxvi in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

CHAPTER XXIX

HOW THOU SHALT DO WHEN THOU FEELEST NO SAVOUR NOR NO COMFORT IN THY THINKING

*NEVERTHELESS, methinketh it is good unto thee that, when thou disposest thee for to think on God as I have beforesaid or on otherwise, [if thy heart be dull and murk]† and thou findest no savour nor devotion for to think, but only a naked desire and a weak will, that thou wouldest fain think on God but thou cannot: then I believe it is good for thee that thou strive not too much with thyself [as thou wouldest by thine own might overcome thyself];‡ for thou mightest lightly fall so into more murkness,§ unless thou were more sly‖ in thy working. And therefore I hold it then most secure unto

* Here begin ch. xv in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. xviii in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

† Omitted from *Lambeth* 472 and *B. M. Harl.* 2397 *MSS.* and from the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533.

‡ Omitted from *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2254 and from the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533.

§ Darkness. ‖ Skilful, clever, dexterous.

thee for to say thy *Pater Noster*, or thine *Ave*, or else thy *Matins*, or else for to read upon thy Psalter. For that is evermore a secure standard that will not fail: whoso may cleave thereto, he shall not err. And if thou may by thy prayer get devotion, look then this devotion be only in affection—that is to say, in great desire to God with ghostly delight. Hold forth thy saying and break not lightly off; for oft it falleth that praying with the mouth getteth and keepeth devotion, and if a man cease of saying, devotion vanisheth away. Nevertheless, if devotion of prayer bring into thine heart a ghostly thought of the manhood of our Lord, or of any other beforesaid, and this thought should be letted by the saying, then mayest thou cease of thy saying and occupy thee in meditations until it pass away.*

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. xxvii.

CHAPTER XXX

WHEREOF THOU SHALT BEWARE IN THY MEDITATION

*But of certain things thee behoveth to beware in thy meditation. Some shall I tell thee.

One is, when thou hast had a ghostly thought, either in imagining of the manhood of our Lord, or of such bodily things, and thy soul hath been comforted and fed therewith, and it passeth away by itself, be not too busy to keep it still by mastery, for it shall then turn to pain and to bitterness.

Also, if it pass not, but dwell still in thy mind without any travail of thyself, and thou for comfort of it will not leave it, and therefore it reaveth thee from thy sleep by nights, or else by days from other good deeds, or else for great fervour of it thy body or thine head falleth into great feebleness [this is

* Here begin ch. x in *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397, ch. xxvii in the *Bodleian Vernon* and *B. M. Add.* 22283 *MSS.* and in the printed edition of 1494, ch. xvi in the printed editions of 1507, 1519, 1525 and 1533, and ch. xix in the printed editions of 1517 and 1531.

not well].* Then thou shalt wilfully break off when time cometh, sometimes when thou hast most devotion and were loathest for to leave it—as when it passeth reasonable time, or else it turneth to disease of thine even-Christian. Unless thou do so, else doest thou not well, as methinketh, nor wisely neither.

* Omitted from *Lambeth* 472 and *B. M. Harl.* 2397 *MSS.* and from the printed editions of 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533.

CHAPTER XXXI

A WORLDLY MAN OR WOMAN, IF HE BE LETTED BECAUSE OF COMPUNCTION, IT IS NO FORCE

A WORLDLY man or woman that feeleth not peradventure devotion* twice in a year, if he feel by the grace of our Lord Jesu great compunction for his sins, or else a mind of the passion of our Lord: if he were put from his sleep and his rest a night, or two, or three, until his head work, it is no force,† for it cometh to him but seldom. But to thee or to another man that hath the manner of working in custom as it were each other day, it is speedful for to have discretion in your working, not fully fall thereto for to follow it as much as it will come. And I hold that it is good for thee for to use this manner in whatever devotion that thou be, that thou hang not too long thereupon, either for to put thee long from thy meat, or from thy sleep in time, or‡ for to dis-ease

* Here ends the text of *B. M. Add. MS.* 22283.

† It does not matter.

‡ Inserted from the *Bodleian Vernon, Linc. Cath. Thornton* and *B. M. Harl.* 2254 *MSS.*, and from the printed editions of 1494, 1507, 1517, 1519, 1525 and 1533.

any other man unskilfully.* The wise man saith thus: *Omnia tempus habent*—"All things have time."†

‡Another thing there is that thee behoveth to have: to beware if thy thought be occupied in the imagination of the manhood of our Lord, or in any such other, and after this thou art busy with all thy desire of thine heart for to seek knowing or feeling more ghostly of the Godhead, press not too much therein, nor suffer not thine heart to fall from thy desire, as if thou were aye biding after§ some quaint stirring with thy body, or some wonderful feeling other than thou hast had. Thou shalt not do so. It is enough to thee and to me for to have a desire and a longing to our Lord. And, if he will of his free grace, over this desire, send us of his ghostly light and open our ghostly eyes for to see and know more of him than we have had before by common travail, thank we him thereof. And if he will not, for we are not meek enough, or else we are not disposed by cleanness of living in other ways for to receive that grace: then shall we meekly know our own wretchedness, and hold us paid|| with the desire that we

* Unreasonably. † *Eccl.* iii 1.

‡ Here begins ch. xxviii in the *Bodleian Vernon MS.* and in the printed edition of 1494.

§ Waiting for. || Pleased, satisfied, content.

have to him and with other common thoughts that may lightly fall under our imagination—as of our own sins, or Christ's passion, or such others, or else with prayers of the Psalter or some other—and love him with all our hearts that he will give us that. If thou do otherwise thou mayest lightly be beguiled by the spirit of error. For it is presumption, that a man by his own wit press so much into knowing of ghostly things, unless he felt plenty of grace. For the wise man saith thus: *Scrutator maiestatis opprimetur a gloria.* That is to say, "Ransacker of the might of God and of his majesty without great cleanness and meekness shall be overlaid and oppressed of himself."*†

And therefore the wise man saith in another place thus: *Altiora te ne quaesieris et fortiora te ne scrutatus fueris.* That is to say, "High things that are above thy might, wit and thy reason seek not, and greater things that are above thy might ransack not."‡ By these words the wise man forbiddeth not utterly for to seek and ransack ghostly and heavenly

* *Prov.* xxv 27.

† Here end the texts of the *Bodleian Vernon, Linc. Cath. Thornton* and *B. M. Harl.* 2254 *MSS. B. M. Harl. MS.* 2254 adds the words: "God of his goodness grant us that grace to dwell with him in his sweet place. Amen."

‡ *Eccli.* iii 22.

things; but he forbiddeth us that as long as we are fleshly and boisterous, not cleansed from vain love of the world, that we take not upon us by our own travail, nor by our own wit, for to ransack or feel ghostly things. Nor though we feel ghostly things and great fervour of the love of God so much that we set at nought all earthly things, and us thinketh* that we would forsake for God's love all the joys and all the wealth of the world, yet are we not at once able and ready for to seek and behold ghostly things that are above us, until our souls be made subtle, and till they be made sad† and stabled in virtues by process of time and increasing of grace. For, as St Gregory saith, " No man suddenly is made sovereign in grace; but from little he beginneth and by process waxeth, until he come to the most."‡

* It seems to us.

† Dignified, grave, serious.

‡ *Neque enim, sicut dictum est, repente ad summa pervenitur, sed ad virtutum celsitudinem per incrementa mens ducitur.* (*Moral. Lib.* xxii—*in Caput* xxxi, *B. Job*, 46.)

Cf. The Scale of Perfection, Bk. II, ch. xvii, pp. 229-30: " But from the lowest to the highest a soul may not suddenly start, no more than a man that will climb upon a ladder high and setteth his foot upon the lowest rung may at the next fly up to the highest; but it behoveth him to go by process one after another till he may come to the topmost. Right so is it ghostly; no man is made

And so grant us to do, the Father and Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

And thus is this matter ended and read.

suddenly sovereign in grace, but through long exercise and sly working a soul may come thereto, namely when he helpeth and teacheth a wretched soul in whom all grace lieth. For without special help and inwardly teaching of him may no soul come thereto." Here end the texts of the printed edition of 1494, and of *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397, which adds the words: "Deo gracias, et pax ho*minibus* bone voluntatis. Amen."

II

HERE BEGINNETH A TREATISE OF EIGHT CHAPTERS NECESSARY FOR MEN THAT GIVE THEMSELVES TO PERFECTION, WHICH WAS FOUND IN MASTER LEWIS DE FONTIBUS BOOK AT CAMBRIDGE AND TURNED INTO ENGLISH BY MASTER WALTER HILTON OF THURGARTON

CHAPTER I

OF TOKENS AND WORKINGS OF LOVE

THE first token of love is that the lover submit fully his will to the will of him that he loveth; and this special love hath three workings.

The first is, if he that is loved be simple* and poor, meek and in despite,† then he that loveth coveteth to be vile, poor and meek, and to be in reproof‡ like to him that he loveth.

The second, that it maketh a man to leave all manner of affection or friendship that is contrary to this love; and so it maketh him forsake father and all other affections, inasmuch as they are contrary to the will of him that he loveth.

The third is, that there is nothing hid in the one's heart that he will not shew it to the other. And this is a special token of high love betwixt two persons, and this is the fulfilling of these other workings aforesaid. For why, through this shewing of privities§ their hearts are opened, so that they are together more perfectly bounden.

* Poor or humble in condition.
† Contempt, scorn, disdain.
‡ Shame, disgrace, ignominy or reproach.
§ Mysteries.

CHAPTER II

OF WITHDRAWING OF DEVOTION: HOW A MAN SHALL DO

If thou wilt continually sty up to perfection, and in the way of God which thou art entered, ever profit* more and more and increase from virtue to virtue. Thou shalt never pray the less when grace of devotion is withdrawn and temptations and tribulations come upon thee, than then thou hast grace of devotion without temptation. But then it is most acceptable† and most pleasing to God, when in withdrawing of devotion thou art in tribulation and discomfort, and yet nevertheless thou prayest, and wakest and doest all other good deeds. And so, therefore, do thou thyself all good deeds without devotion, the which thou didest before with devotion. Wherefore, if there come sometimes temptations and tribulations (the which are ordained for to punish and for to cleanse God's children) and devotion be withdrawn, strive thee then not the less

* Make progress, advance, go forward.
† MS. "queemful."

to pray, not the less to wake, nor to fast, and not the less in other good works for to stand: so that through continuance in prayers with the tears of thine eyes unceasably* thou exercise thee, that thou might as it were constrain God to give thee fervour and heat of holy devotion. Whoso will be perfect and live after this chapter, do as Cato saith: *Cum recte vivas ne cures verba malorum.*†

* Incessantly.

† This quotation is from *The Distichs of Cato*, a mediæval textbook, the authorship of which was attributed to one Dionysius Cato, of whom nothing is known. In the edition published in 1922 by Professor Wayland Johnson Chase (*University of Wisconsin Studies in the Social Sciences and History, Number* 7) the couplet reads as follows:

Cum recte uiuas, ne cures uerba malorum :
Arbitrii non est nostri, quid quisque loquatur.
Liber III, 2.

and it is translated thus:

" Upright, care not if bad men thee deride;
'Tis not within our power men's tongues to guide."

In his Introduction Professor Chase writes: " Good authority supports the opinion that between 117 and 324 this collection of apothegms was made by an unknown writer living in the western part of the Roman Empire, and that by the close of the fifth century the name of Cato had come to be attached to it. The prefix Dionysius was not added until the fifteenth century, when the learned Scaliger mistakenly used it in one or both of the editions he published." He further states that the book was

Do thou that longeth* to thee, and thy loved dear Jesu Christ shall well do that pertaineth to him.† Prayer that is made with great enforce,‡ when the slow flesh would be unlusty,§ is to God acceptable. For why, it driveth the loved Jesu Christ for to yield, and for to eke‖ to thee grace and devotion, and in temptation great profit. Pray then continually, if thou wilt purchase to thee grace of devotion and for to profit in the way of Christ: and for no tribulation, nor for no temptation, leave never prayer, neither in working of worldly work, nor in bed nor out of bed, in company nor solitary. For if thou be in tribulation or in temptation and prayest lastingly, grace and devotion shall

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used in schools as a first Latin reader up to the end of the eighteenth century. *Smith's Classical Dictionary* states that nothing is known of Dionysius Cato, but that the *Distichs* were known in the middle of the fourth century, and recognised from that time forward as the composition of some Cato. So, in like manner, all the MSS. agree in presenting that name; while for the addition of Dionysius we are indebted to a single codex once in the possession of Simon Bos, which was inspected by Scaliger and Vinet, and pronounced by them of great antiquity. *Lambeth MS.* 472 and *B. M. Harl. MS.* 993 read *non* for *ne*.

* Belongeth.

† *Cf. The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. xxvi, p. 73: "And therefore do on thy work, and surely I promise thee he shall not fail in his."

‡ Effort, exertion. § Idle, slothful. ‖ Add.

be eked, and new comfort shall be given to thee of Jesu Christ thy loved. And though the fiend put into thine heart that it is nought that thou prayest, despise and defy him with mouth and with heart, and ever pray; and the more that thy tribulation and thine affliction is, the more shall be thy comfort when grace of devotion is given to thee. Pray then continually, reading in the book of life—that is, in the life of Jesu Christ, the which was poverty, meekness, sorrow, despite, affliction, and soothfast obedience.

And when thou art well entered into this way, then many temptations and tribulations of the fiend, of the world and of the flesh, shall in many wise* dis-ease† thee, and hugely torment thee and discomfort thee. But, if thou wilt overcome all stiffly,‡ pray and patiently abide thy loved Jesu Christ, and he shall send thee help and comfort unspeakable, that no tongue may tell how much it is.

When thou art tormented with tribulation or with temptation, use also often with thy prayer confession, in the which thou shalt shew with all the contrition of thine heart to thy confessor, entirely and plainly, all the wounds of thy conscience, more and less,

* Ways. † Disturb, trouble.
‡ Steadfastly, resolutely, firmly, constantly.

as far forth as thou wouldest shew them to thine own angel. And that is a sovereign medicine to put all temptations and tribulations away, and for to purchase much grace of God's comfort. For why, the fiend that is full of pride may not suffer the meekness of pure confession, nor the fervour of continual orison; through which works specially our sweet Lord Jesu Christ is, as it were through violence, drawn into a loving soul and so constrained for to comfort it.

Set then all thy study and thy business for to make ready a place and a privy chamber for thy Lord Jesu Christ, thy spouse in thy soul, by sweet meditation, by continual orisons* and by often† confessions made each day, or else each third day, if a man may have leisure: so that the least hour of thy time be not forgotten, in the which thou hast in many things offended thy worthy Lord and loved Jesu Christ. For through these three aforesaid works, meditation, orison, and confession, many a man cometh to restful cleanness of conscience.

But beware that thou through recklessness give no place to thine enemies continually besieging thee; and that thou doest when for vanity or for idleness thou leavest thy prayers. Therefore, the more thou art tempted and travailed, the more stably dwell

* Prayers. † Frequent.

in thy prayer, and leave it not lightly, unless it be for feebleness of the head or of thy brain. For why, feebleness of brain will sometimes fall of unmeasurable continuance in prayer, or in waking, or excess in fasting: and then is it good to stint* awhile. For why, St Jerome saith, "He errs not a little but mickle that prefers the lesser good to the more good"† (as he doth that setteth more price by fasting than by deeds of charity, and he that setteth waking before wholeness of brain, of wit and of reason); and he also errs greatly that by unmeasurable and indiscreet saying or singing of psalms or of hymns falleth into frenzy,‡ or into madness, or into bitter heaviness. Therefore it is good then for to stint from multitude of words, and to think only in thine heart as easily as thou mayest: and so through virtue of continual prayer, used both in mouth and in heart, shalt thou be delivered and eased of thy temptations.§

* Cease, stop.

† The editor has not been able to trace this quotation; but St Augustine, in a passage on inordinate love of the creature, writes: *noli relicto superiore bono, curvare te ad inferius bonum.* (*Sermo* xxi, 3.)

‡ Mental derangement.

§ *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. xxii, p. 40: "For anent thy bodily kind it is good to use discretion in eating, drinking and sleeping, and in all manner of bodily penance, and in long prayers

By continuance in prayer is light of grace given to a soul, which cleareth the conscience and setteth it groundly in deep soothfastness of meekness. And through continual looking and reading in the book of life (that is, on the blessed person Jesu Christ and on his life) is the soul rooted and grounded in patience and in charity. For why, in that looking mayest thou be taught and informed of all that thee needeth for to know.* And

by speech or in bodily feeling by great fervour of devotion, either in weeping or such other, and also in imagining of the spirit when a man feeleth no grace;" and Bk. I, ch. lxxv, pp. 146-7: "For wit thou well what man or woman that shall be occupied ghostly in thoughts, unskilful pain or hunger wilfully taken, or bodily sickness in the stomach or in the head, or in other part of the body for the default of good ruling of himself by too much fasting or by any other wise, such a one shall much let the spirit, and much hinder him from the knowing and the beholding of ghostly things, unless he have the more grace."

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection* (ed. E. Underhill), Bk. I, ch. xci, p. 218: "And that mayest thou do the better and the more readily, if thou be busy for to set thine heart most upon one thing. And that thing is nought else but our Lord Jhesu Christ, that blessed Person, God and man; whom thou shalt set in the intent and in the meaning of thy soul as the light of thine heart, with great reverent dread for to displease him, and with great ghostly desire to God for to please him, for to love him, for to know him, for to see him, and for to have him by grace here in a little feeling, and in the bliss of heaven with a full being. This desire thus grounded in Jhesu

through that thou shalt be able to have such patience that thou shalt will to receive gladly all manner of tribulation and disease as for a great comfort. For why, through them thou shalt feel and see thyself somewhat like to thy Lord Jesu Christ, him that thou lovest. Yea, thou shalt hold thyself so unwise and so unworthy in God's sight that it is no dis-ease to thee whatsoever thou mayest suffer. For why, without comparison he suffered more for thee.

Nevertheless, yet shalt thou trust and hope that as thou art fellow with him in pain and in disease — little though it be — so shalt thou be fellow with him in his joy and in his bliss. For, as the apostle saith, *If we be*

Christ if thou keep it, shall well tell thee which is sin and which is not, and which is good and which is better good. And if thou wilt fasten thy thought thereto, it shall teach thee all that thee needeth, and it shall get thee all that thee wanteth."

Cf. also *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. xxxv, p. 89: "God's word, either written or spoken, is likened to a mirror. Ghostly, the eye of thy soul is thy reason; thy conscience is thy visage ghostly. And right as thou seest that if a foul spot be in thy bodily visage, the eye of the same visage may not see that spot nor learn where it is, without a mirror or the teaching of another than itself: right so is it ghostly. Without reading or hearing of God's word it is impossible to man's understanding that a soul that is blinded in a habit of sin should see the foul spot in his conscience."

*fellows of Christ's passions, we shall be fellows of his blessed consolations.** Wherefore it seemeth that there is no more dignity nor worthiness that a man may come to than for to have tribulation for Christ's love, by the which a man is made Christ's fellow here in this life and in the bliss of heaven without end. Amen.

* 2 *Cor.* i 7.

CHAPTER III

OF PERILS THAT ARE TO BE ESCHEWED BY A GHOSTLY MAN

BEWARE first that thou give not thyself, nor thy full affection, nor thy full homely* friendship to no person, unless thou first have received the gift and the spirit of discretion, by the which thou mayest know from which thou shalt flee and which thou shalt draw to. Until the time thou come to this, keep thee aye plain and common, to each man half strange, saving ever the bond of charity.

Also beware specially of them that have sweet, pleasant words in their speakings, and have none holiness in virtue, nor sweetness in heart, but a likeness of holiness only in the tongue and in the habit: these that make a show of themselves, and avaunt† themselves of visions and of revelations, or of other quaint manner of feelings, or of singular‡ doings, or wits or understandings over other men, through which they are wondered and over much praised and worshipped§ of them that they speak to; for

* Familiar, intimate. † Boast.
‡ Remarkable, extraordinary, unusual.
§ Honoured.

such manner of men are often-times snares of deceits to them that are not wise.*

First avise† thee of them and look them, and bring them in thy mind to the presence of Jesu Christ—as if thou wouldest take a thing out of a murk place for to know what it is, and lay it and look it in the light. Right so Jesu Christ is light, and there is no light of grace nor of soothfastness but he and in him. And, therefore, such manner of men and all other—yea, and thyself with them—bring in thy prayers and in thy mind to Jesu Christ; and there shall they be

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. xx, p. 33: "They show outward meekness, in habit and holy speech, in a lowly bearing and, as it seemeth, in many bodily and ghostly virtues. But nevertheless in the will and in the affection of their heart, where meekness should be, it is feigned. For they deem and despise and set at naught other men, that will not do as they do and teach. They hold them to be either fools by uncunning, or blinded by fleshly living, and, therefore, they lift themselves on high in their own sight above all others, weening that they live better than others and that they only have the soothfastness of good living, both in ghostly feeling and singular grace of God, and knowledge surpassing other men. And from this sight of themselves riseth a delight in their hearts in which they worship and praise themselves, as if there were none but they. They praise and thank God with their lips, but in their heart they steal, as thieves, the worship and the thanking from God, and set in it themselves; and so they have neither meekness in feeling nor in will."

† Advise.

seen what they are, there shall they be tried, there shalt thou through beholding of him and of his life see who is like to him and who is unlike to him. But yet, beware that thou deem* not a man fully what he is after thy sight; but all cometh as a thing uncertain in the privity of God's doom.† Nevertheless, thou mayest, by that sight of Christ's life, follow and rule thine own conscience in this point—whom thou shalt follow and whom refuse, and with whom thou mayest be homely and with whom thou shalt be strange. And that manner of deeming is behoveful for thee.

Also beware of fervours. As, if thou feel the spirit of fervour greatly fallen upon thee, think first and avise thee well, ere that thou fully follow it in working, what is the beginning of it and whereof it is caused, and think upon the midst, and also what end will follow of it. And then follow it as mickle as thou mayest understand by grace and counsel,‡ and by Holy Writ—that is,

* Judge.

† Judgement. *Cf. The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. xxx, pp. 78-9: "Each man beware that he presume not to take upon him to blame and condemn other men's faults unless he feel verily that he be stirred by the Holy Ghost within in his work; for else may he full lightly err in his judgements."

‡ A single person with whom one consults or advises; used here to signify the director or confessor.

according to soothfast virtue of discretion and to the life of Christ, the which life of Christ thou shalt make thy mirror, thy rule, and thy sampler, for to do after it. And, therefore, this life of Christ shalt thou more regard after the inner virtue of Christ than after the outer tokens of his teaching.

And yet also beware of them that say they have gotten the spirit of freedom, and that they have so much grace of love that they may live as them list. They think them so free and so secure that they shall not sin. They make themselves above the law of Holy Church. And they say thus, as St Paul said: *Where the Spirit of God is, there is freedom.** And also thus: *If ye be led by the Spirit, ye are not under the law.*† But they mean not as Paul meant: they understand not his words. These men are expressly against the life of Christ. For why, Christ that was made free made himself thrall‡ for us: and when he was above the law as maker and giver of it, yet he made him buxom§ under the law.‖ Of these men speaketh St Peter thus: *They promise to other men freedom of spirit, and they themselves are thralls in sin and servants of fleshly corruption.*¶

* 2 *Cor.* iii 17.
† *Gal.* v 18.
‡ Serf, slave.
§ Obedient.
‖ *Phil.* ii 6-8.
¶ 2 *Pet.* ii 19.

CHAPTER IV

OF DEGREES BY WHICH A SOUL PASSETH FORTH INTO CONTEMPLATION

THE first degree is in tears and in sighings, and in sorrow for sins, in compunction, and compassion of Christ's passion, and in part feeling of disease and of wretchedness of his even-Christian: and in strong striving against all manner of vices, against all wicked works, wicked words, and wicked wills, and also wicked thoughts, with much pain and sore swink* of body and soul for to gainstand them.

The second degree is great fervour and burning desire, with continuance of prayer, for to please Jesu Christ, for to love him with all thy heart and all thy mights,† and for to feel comfort of his gracious presence. And this burning desire will cleanse the conscience from all rust of sin, both of that that is before done and of that that he each day falleth in. And this work is of great travail and with wonderful business, a little tempered with rest among.‡

* Labour, toil. † Powers

‡ *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xl, p. 353: "And therefore it is called an holy idleness and a rest most busy." *Cf.* also *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. lxix.

The third degree is a state of wonderful sweetness, of softness and of gladness, of rest and of clearness. For in that cometh the grace of the Holy Ghost down into a soul; and then it lighteneth* and purifieth so the soul [that all is as awe, and it anointeth the soul]† with oil of ghostly gladness, and turneth it all into charity of Christ, so that it seemeth that all the limbs of the body and all the making of the world with all the creatures is as a melody of the harp.‡ And then after this is the soul somewhat able to ghostly embraces of Jesu Christ, that is her sweet spouse.

The fourth degree is in sovereign rest of body and soul. And that is when a man is dead and buried to the world and to the flesh, and sleepeth in peace of conscience, and riseth§ without struggling of vain thoughts ever continually in our Lord Jesu Christ.‖

* Enlighteneth.

† Omitted from *Lambeth* 472 and *B. M. Harl.* 993 *MSS.*

‡ *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. xxxii.; *cf.* also *The Song of Angels* (*Cell of Self-Knowledge*, p. 65): "Some soul, by virtue of charity that God giveth it, is so cleansed, that all creatures, and all that he heareth, or seeth, or feeleth by any of his wits, turneth him to comfort and gladness; and the sensuality receiveth new savour and sweetness in all creatures."

§ *B. M. Add. MS.* 10053 reads "resteth."

‖ *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xl, and *The Epistle of Privy Counsel*, ch. vi.

The fifth degree is when a man beginneth for to take* soothfastly the earnest of endless joy, and is raised up to the beholding of heavenly things. Then feeleth and perceiveth he a glimmering of heavenly bliss. And then seeth he somewhat of the state of angels and of blessed souls, and how that all illuminations and all graces of charity and of goodness descend out of the blessed Trinity unspeakable unto Jesu Christ man, and how of that glorious manhood of Christ stream out all graces of light and of love into angels and into holy souls and from them come down to us. And then is a man made able to revelations and contemplations of Jesu Christ.†

* Understand by mental comprehension. *B. M. Add. MS.* 10053 reads "taste."

† *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xliii-xlvi, *Qui Habitat*, ch. viii and xi, and *Benedictus*, p. 219, below.

CHAPTER V

OF PERILS OF HOLY LOVE

A MAN that was holden an high liver* often was asked for to speak of ghostly love. And then he began for to see the falsehood, the perils and the deceits that oftentimes fall in ghostly love. And he said, There is nothing in all the world, neither man nor fiend, nor none other thing that I have so much suspect as I have the affection of love, nor that I am so sore afeared of, unless it be well set. For why, love is so surpassing a thing and so cleaving that it sinketh deeper in a soul than any other thing may do, and there is nothing that so fully occupieth, and bindeth and overmastereth a man's heart as doth love where it is fully had, whether it be good love or bad; and, therefore, unless a man or woman have armour of discretion by which he may keep and govern his love, it will else lightly cast down the soul and make it have a foul fall.

I speak not of fleshly love that is openly evil, the which oweth to be hated of all

* A man who was considered to be advanced in the spiritual life.

Christ's lovers as a thing most fiendly, most perilous and most contrary to the chastity of Christ's love; but I speak of good, ghostly love that is and oweth to be betwixt God and man, and man and man, and man and woman. For why, that love that a soul hath conceived through grace of Jesu Christ, unless it be ordained and ruled with great meekness and with great discretion, and that the fervour be reasonably ordained, soothly, or it lasteth not but soon faileth and vanisheth away, or else it maketh a man to begin some works so overpassingly that he may not continue in them, and so is he fain to flee therefrom.

Also the love that is betwixt man and man, and man and woman—as is betwixt devout men and devout women—that is in God and set for God, unless it be right well looked to and ruled with armours of discretion, either it turneth into fleshly love and into lechery, or else it maketh much of their time be lost and wasted through vain speech and in their common conversation, by reason that their hearts are indiscreetly fastened together in love; and oftentimes falleth that to persons, be it men or women, that love together. But, specially most perilous it is when man and woman love together with as good intent as they can themselves devise, and they love heartily together in good manner and in

honest, that them thinketh* that they would never depart.† And they have together great affections singular, for the goodness that each of them seeth in other. And that maketh each of them to other do many services and great easings, and what each of them doeth to other it is all of love of heart—yea, over much of heart. For them thinketh that they would aye be together, and whatso one liketh the other liketh, and whatso misliketh the one misliketh the other. This love is full perilous and full much blameworthy, though it seem good. And so much it is the more perilous that the peril is not known thereof. For why, it will turn all to flesh, unless it be ruled and governed with armours of discretion.

* It seemeth to them. † Separate.

CHAPTER VI

OF PERFECT LOVE OF CHRIST, WITHOUT WHICH ALL OTHER LOVE IS SUSPECT

THE best love and truest is when a soul is raised and lightened* into knowing of the being of God in Christ—as when the soul seeth how each creature hath his being of him that is sovereign being, that is, God, and it seeth that nothing is soothfast being but God. Of this knowing the soul receiveth a wonderful savour and a great understanding that whatso is of that sovereign being, it is good, and all that he doeth is best done.†

This knowing stirreth and raiseth up a love in the soul answering to that ghostly beholding of the being of Christ; and this knowing maketh a man to love all that hath being of him (that is, all creatures reasonable and unreasonable) for his love that giveth being to all creatures. And specially it

* Enlightened.

† *Cf. The Revelations of Divine Love*, by Julian of Norwich (ed. Dom R. Hudleston, vol. xi of this series), ch. xi, p. 33: "Wherefore me behoveth needs to grant that all-thing that is done, it is well-done: for our Lord God doeth all."

stirreth the soul to love reasonable creatures, and most them the which it perceiveth most loved of Christ. For as the soul seeth Jesu Christ inclined to the love of all creatures, so it is inclined. And then is the soul taught for to love creatures more or less, after the measure and the quality of Christ's love to them and of her love unto him; and the grace of Christ keepeth the soul so in that manner that it shall not pass measure.

And therefore till thou feel this manner of love sadly* grounded in thine heart (the which is had of the ghostly knowing of the being of Christ) hold all thy love suspect and be afeared. But when thou mayest come to that point that thou may hold the sight of thy soul on this blessed person, Jesu Christ, and on his sovereign being stably, in weal and in woe, in ease and in unease, without great blenching away from him; then that wonderful love, that is caused of this knowing and of this beholding, is sufficient to gainstand the venomous darts of all fleshly loves, and to put out their malice from the mind of the soul.

* Steadfastly, firmly, fixedly, unchangingly.

CHAPTER VII

OF TRANSFORMING OF THE SOUL INTO THE LOVE OF JESU CHRIST

THERE are three manners of transforming of the soul. One is when the soul is made meek and buxom to the will of God, so that it shapeth itself in all that it may for to be like to him, following his works, and for to transfigure, and turn and have in itself Christ's passion, with suffering of all shames and reproofs as Christ suffered; so that it had liefer be like to Christ through sufferance of tribulation than for to have all the mirth* of the world.

Another there is for to be transformed with God, and that is when his soul is oned with Christ and right homely with him. And the soul hath then great feeling of Christ's love, and often receiveth privy sweetness of his inspiration, and many great comforts and delectations;† but they are not so great but that they may by thought and by words be shewed.

The third transforming is when Jesu Christ and a soul are so perfectly, so un-

* Joy, happiness. † Delights.

partably, and so accordably* oned and bounden together, that Christ is in the soul and the soul is in him so fully as if they both were but one spirit, as St Paul saith: *Whoso cleaveth to God, he is one spirit with him.*† Then feeleth the soul high things and privy of Christ Jesu, and of his Father and of the Holy Spirit: and it taketh‡ such delectations of Christ's charity that they may not fully be conceived by thoughts of man's reason, nor declared forth by words of man's tongue.

The first transforming is not sufficient for to rule and govern the affection of man's heart, nor the second neither. For why, the fervour of the affection, whether it be set actually in God or in man, is oftentimes mightier, more eager and more masterful than is the wisdom of discretion of the soul; and therefore whiles it is so the love may trip,§ and stumble and err, either by overmuch or by over-little.‖

* Agreeably, harmoniously. † 1 *Cor.* vi 17.
‡ *B. M. Add. MS.* 10053 reads "tasteth."
§ MS. "snapere."
‖ *Cf. Qui Habitat*, ch. xi, p. 154, below, and *Benedictus*, p. 231, below. *Cf.* also *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. i, p. 8: "In the which solitary form and manner of living thou mayest learn to lift up the foot of thy love, and to step towards that state and degree of living that is *perfect*, and the last state of all"; and *The Epistle of Privy Counsel*, ch. v, p. 199,

But by the third is healed and gotten into the soul such a wisdom and such a deep knowing, through that wonderful meddling and oneing of Christ's light lightening and of the soul lightened, that the soul is taught

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"And the foot of thy love shall not stumble," and p. 202: "*Quia Dominus erit in latere tuo, et custodiet pedem tuum ne capiaris.* That is, For our Lord shall be in thy side ready and nigh to thine help, and he shall keep thy foot (that is, the ascending of thy love by the which thou goest to God) so that thou shalt not be taken by no subtlety nor guile of thine enemies, the fiend and his followers, the world and the flesh." *Cf.* also *The Fire of Love*, by Richard Rolle (ed. F. M. M. Comper, Bk. I, ch. xxiii, p. 100): "A soul can not be reasonable without love whiles it is in this life: wherefore the love thereof is the foot of the soul, by which, after this pilgrimage, it is borne to God or the fiend; that it may be subject to him whose will here it served." The idea of love being the foot of the soul is taken from St Augustine, who writes: *Pes animae recte intelligitur amor: qui cum pravus est, vocatur cupiditas aut libido; cum autem rectus, dilectio vel charitas. Amore enim movetur tanquam ad locum quo tendit.* (*Enarr. in Psalmum* ix 15.) And again: *Non ergo loco quisque longe est a Deo, sed dissimilitudine. Quid est, dissimilitudine? Mala vita, malis moribus. Si enim bonis moribus propinquatur Deo; malis moribus receditur a Deo. Unus ergo idemque homo corpore stans uno loco, et amando Deum accedit ad Deum, et amando iniquitatem recedit a Deo: nusquam pedes movet, et tamen potest et accedere et recedere. Pedes enim nostri in hoc itinere, affectus nostri sunt. Prout quisque affectum habuerit, prout quisque amorem habuerit, ita accedit vel recedit a Deo.* (*Enarr. in Psalmum* xciv 2.)

by the spirit of discretion how it shall be ruled, and govern the love that it hath in Christ, and how it shall receive ghostly feelings and privy sweetness and delectations in Christ, and how it shall ordain, rule and measure the fervours of Christ's love and the visitations of his gracious presence so wisely, and so privily and so soberly, that it shall be able to last easily and continually in the feelings and in the ghostly comforts of Christ's love, not discovering itself in sight of other men, neither by laughing, nor by sobbing, nor by no quaint token of bearing of the body.* Also by the same spirit of discretion the soul is taught how wisely, how soberly, how chastely, how meekly and how lovely it shall behave itself towards its even-Christians, man and woman; and how gladly, benignly for to condescend when it seeth time, person and reason why and when it is for to condescend when it seeth time to them. And when it seeth that it is not for to condescend to them, then will it not in no wise condescend to them; but it is wondrous stiff, and straight and strong, as a thing that might not be stirred nor changed, nor bowed on no side.† And the

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xxix.

† *Cf. The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. xxv, p. 70: "But I say that he shall be made so virtuous and so charitable by the virtue of this work, that his will

skill* is this: God is in himself unchangeable and a soul is changeable of itself; but then, when the soul is oned to Christ by love, the more that it is oned to him the more unchangeable it is and the less it hath of changeability.

For why, the wisdom and the cunning, the sadness† and the light of discretion that the soul hath by the virtue of this oneness in love, giveth the soul love and might, so that it may with these armours rule the affection of love to God and to its even-Christians without error or falsehood.

And, therefore, he that never felt this gift of discretion, and of wisdom and of grace in his heart, it is speedful to him that he suffer not his affection fully to be bounden to no creature, neither man nor woman, singularly nor privily, nor surpassingly, for perils that lightly may fall thereof; but

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shall be afterwards, when he condescendeth to converse with or pray for his even-Christian—not that he should descend from all this work, for that may not be without great sin, but from the height of this work, the which is speedful and needful to do sometimes, as charity asketh—as specially then directed to his foe as to his friend, his stranger as his kin. Yea! and sometimes more to his foe than to his friend."

* Cause.

† Seriousness, soberness, gravity of mind or demeanour.

that he be plain and common to all, and not full homely with none, till he may through the light of discretion know by experience whose conversation and communing he shall flee as noyous* to him and unprofitable, whose conversation and affection he shall covet as to him easy and comfortable.

* Causing annoyance, vexatious, troublesome.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW GHOSTLY LOVE IS TURNED INTO FLESHLY LOVE

It falleth oftentimes that a devout man loveth another devout man, or a devout woman, in good honest love and for God with good intent, and after this love increaseth so much betwixt them that each of them desireth the presence of the other unmeasurably, so far forth that if they may not have presence at will they wax heavy and sickly, and sometimes when they come together their affection ever waxeth so that they are more sickly; and that bindeth them together in such an homely acquaintance of hearts that whatso the one willeth the other willeth, and whatso liketh the one liketh or misliketh the other, be it good, be it evil.

And this is full perilous betwixt man and woman, when they are thus both deeply wounded with the affection of love. For why, when their hearts are thus homely according together, needs them must show outwardly sometimes by other tokens that seem not much evil what the heart meaneth. And thus by words and by tokens, when each

of them showeth to other how well each of them loveth other, thus is the love more increased and more changed from ghostliness into fleshliness. But yet they are busy for to colour and hide the fleshly affection under cleanness of charity, and of ghostly profit and of edification of soul. For thus they say, each of them to other, that they mean nought but good. And so, under security of that meaning and of that false weening, they covet each of them to handle and feel other, and kiss other, as seemeth to them as it were devotion and good love, but in soothfastness it is slaying of devotion and lecherous love, and great hindering and harming to the soul that would and should feel Christ's love.

Nevertheless, in the beginning their reason grudgeth somewhat against it and the conscience gainsayeth it often. For why, the reason is not yet through customary communing slain nor strangled all fully. But when it is often had in custom, such manner of doing, then is reason blinded and strangled and the conscience falsely eased; so that them thinketh that they may use such speakings and such lookings, touchings, handlings, kissings, and such tokens of fleshly love without peril. And sometimes they say that they may do thus, and, though it be a sin, yet it is no great sin. And thus,

aye, by little and little, ghostly love falleth and dieth and fleshly love waxeth* and quickeneth.† And after this, by process of time, the fervour of love waxeth so much that it taketh away their tongues and all the mights of their souls, so far forth that neither of them will gainsay other for displeasing of either other in any thing that either of them will do, though it were deadly sin.

And when it is thus far forth brought, then may neither words, nor touchings, nor handlings, nor kissings, nor bodily presence make a full seeth‡ to their love: and then be they stirred full to temptations of the fiend for to consent to the deed of lechery and fully to perform it if that they might have leisure.

And forasmuch as this peril may lightly fall of misruling of love, therefore it is good to thee for to have suspect and dread in thyself all manner of love when it is privily and singularly set unto any one person, man or woman. For though it be first good and ghostly and beginneth in God and goodness, nevertheless, often it falleth that it is afterward bad and fleshly and endeth in the works of the fiend. From which love and perils of love the armours of discretion, gotten by the wounds of Christ

* Groweth. † Cometh into being.
‡ Satisfaction.

in the manner beforesaid, save us and all Christian men.* Amen.

Explicit.

* With this chapter *cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xxviii, p. 278: "And also gluttony and lechery, and also all other fleshly uncleanness utterly he must leave, that the affection be bound to no woman by fleshly homeliness. For it is no doubt that such blind love that is sometimes atwixt a man and a woman, and seemeth good and honest—for that they would not sin in deed—in the sight of God is full unclean and well great sin. For it is a great sin that a man shall suffer his affection—that should be fastened to Jesus and to all virtues and to all ghostly cleanness—for to be bound with any fleshly love of any creature wilfully, namely, if it be so much that it beareth down the thought and maketh it unrestful, that he may have no savour in God. Thus I hold it to be wilful if a man doth it and saith it is no sin, or else is so blinded with it that he will not see it."

III

HERE BEGINNETH QUI HABITAT

CHAPTER I

HOW GOD SAVETH EVERY MAN THAT TRUSTETH IN HIM

QUI habitat in adiutorio altissimi : in protectione dei caeli commorabitur. All men that will live in this world *christianly shall suffer persecution,* as the apostle saith,* either from without by malice of men, or from within by temptations of the fiend. Therefore no man should deceive himself by false security on the one side, nor on the other side downcast himself by vain dread of his own wickedness.

The prophet through inspiration writeth a psalm, warning us of the temptations that fall in this life, and teaching us help and remedy against them. And he beginneth thus: " He that liveth in help of the Highest, in healing† of God of heaven he shall dwell, he liveth in help of the Highest."‡ That is, the meek in spirit that knoweth and feeleth himself unmighty§ and unwise to help himself in any temptation, and therefore he forsaketh himself and seeketh help of God, putting all

* 2 *Tim.* iii 12.
† Safety, salvation.
‡ *Ps.* xc 1.
§ Powerless.

his trust in him—not suddenly for a short time but lastingly living in his help, aye feeling alike of his own weakness, and aye receiving alike savour* of our Lord's goodness—soothly,† he dwelleth in the healing of our Lord of heaven.

As a man, in saving of his body for dread of storms, fleeth into an house and holdeth him therein that he perish not; right so the righteous man, for saving of his soul from temptations of the fiend, fleeth to our Lord with a meek heart and a burning desire, and then our Lord at once taketh him to his protection and healeth‡ him from his enemies that they may not harm him. And, soothly, he that may live in the help of the highest through grace here in this life, he shall dwell in security of endless joy in the bliss of heaven.

* Perception, understanding.
† MS. reads " and soothly." ‡ Saveth.

CHAPTER II

THAT A MAN SHOULD TURN HIM FROM SIN TO THE LOVE OF GOD

BUT what shall the wise man do that feeleth so great profit in his Lord's help? Shall he be idle and reckless? Nay, but *Dicet domino: susceptor meus es tu, refugium meum, deus meus; sperabo in eum*—"He shall say to our Lord; mine uptaker art thou, my refuge, my God; I shall hope in him."

"He shall say to our Lord": not by sound of mouth, as lovers of the world do, or with proud hearts, as hypocrites and heretics do (of the which our Lord saith in the gospel: *Not all that say to me Lord, Lord, shall have the bliss of heaven*),* but in mouth and in heart by full will and true intent to God. For that saying God heareth and approveth, and that word may no man speak but by grace. As the apostle saith, *No man may say Lord God, Jesu, but in the Holy Ghost.*† That is to say, no man may say truly "Jesu," unless his will and his intent be turned from sin to the love of God by grace of the Holy Ghost.

And that is only the righteous man, for he shall say to our Lord what? Soothly,

* *Matt.* vii 21. † 1 *Cor.* xii 3.

"Mine uptaker art thou"; for when I was sunken into the mire of sin, blinded with liking and lust of the world, and had no sight of mine own mischief* nor feeling of light of grace, thou, Lord, through the touching of thy blessed light took me up from where I lay, showing to my sight the horribility of my sins, giving to me very contrition and whole forsaking of them, and fully turning and drawing mine heart for to love thee.†

And not only mine uptaker but also "My refuge thou art." For, after that time that I was turned to thee in will and in work, my ghostly enemies more sharply pursued me with divers temptations, that I wist not what I might do; but, as unmighty, I fled from them in my thought to the Lord, asking help with burning desire. And I found thee only my refuge; for thou with the shadowing of thy grace easedst me from pains‡ and from lusts, mightily overcoming all mine enemies. And "Thou art my God." I will have no God but thee that hast so much done for me. For, though I may not see thee as thou art, nor feel thee as thou art in thy blessed kind: nevertheless, by the effect of thy gracious working in me, that thou hast done so much

* Evil plight or condition.

† *Cf. Mixed Life*, ch. xiii, p. 45, above, and *Bonum Est*, ch. i, p. 172, below.

‡ Suffering, distress of mind.

for me, I see thee and feel thee as I see the sun and feel the heat of it by shining of the beam. Right so I see thee and feel thee by thy gifts of grace. For, soothly, that thing that took me up from the filth of sin and hath strengthened me through sweetness in devotion for to love him—that is my God, whatsoever it be. Well I wot a mighty thing and a sovereign good thing it is; therefore I shall hope in him. Lovers of the world set not their hope in God but in man, some for bodily profit and some for ghostly. Some covet great worships and much riches, and that they might have them they set their savour in lords or in power of rich friends. And some will live still in lusts of the world, and set their hope in the prayer of a good man, weening that they shall be safe by his prayer though they forsake not their sin. These beguile themselves; for the prophet saith, *Cursed be that man that setteth his hope in man.** But I shall hope in God, asking of him my bodily sustenance only, as me needeth, without covetousness of worship or of riches,† and

* *Jer.* xvii 5.

† *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xxxix, p. 345: " for he thinketh that he needeth no more of all the riches in earth than a scant bodily sustenance for to save the bodily life withal, as long as God will: and that he may lightly have." *Cf.* also *Bonum Est*, ch. vii, p. 192, and ch. x, pp. 204-5, below.

the salvation only of my soul by his mercy, not setting mine hope in mine own deserts nor in the prayer of man, but in cleanness of conscience from all manner of sin and in mightiness of will to the love of God, to all virtues and to all good deeds.

CHAPTER III

HOW THE SWEET VOICE OF JESU SOUNDETH IN THE SOUL

AND, soothly, unless I set fully all mine hope in him I were much to blame. *Quoniam ipse liberavit me de laqueo venantium, et a verbo aspero:* "For why, he hath delivered me from the snare of hunters and from a sharp word."

Hunters are fiends that are deadly enemies to the righteous man and pursue him to slay, not bodily but ghostly, and take him into the snare that is the love of this world. In this snare of worldly love were my feet set and fastened, that time when I had no dread of God nor knowing of myself but followed my fleshly desire as a beast doeth, setting my thought and my love in riches and worships, in pride of myself and in all worldly vanity. In this snare was I bounden and tied many days and felt it not. Methought I did well enough, for I saw no default therein; for methought that nearhand* all men did so as I did. But our Lord through his shining of his blessed light touched my blind heart

* Nearly.

and shewed to my sight that it was a snare of death, this love and this liking of the world that I stood in. And with the sweet feeling of his love he brake mightily this snare and delivered me out of it. He made me to loathe that that I most liked, and made me forsake that that I most coveted of worldly vanity: and so made he me free from thraldom* of worldly life.

And not only he did so, but "He delivered me from a sharp word." This sharp word is backbiting, scorning and evil speaking of froward† men against young men newly turned from the world to God. As when worldly lovers see a man or a woman stirred by grace for to despise themselves and the liking of the world and fully and meekly give them to the service of God, at once they are evil paid with them, and call them hypocrites or young saints and old devils, and hold them fools, and say that they shall never bring to end that that they begin.‡

* Bondage, servitude, captivity.

† Bad, evilly-disposed.

‡ *Cf. The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. xviii, p. 55: "And right as Martha complained then on Mary her sister, right so yet unto this day all actives complain of contemplatives. For if there be a man or a woman in any company of this world—whatsoever company it be, religious or seculars, I except none—the which man or woman (whichever that it be) feeleth himself stirred through grace and by

And so by such sharp words they let some man from the love of God, and, namely, him that is weak in will and dreadeth more a false word of a wretched man than the sharp menacing of our Lord God, and more regardeth a vain pleasing word of a fleshly friend for to live thereto than the sweet calling of the Holy Ghost. But the righteous man that is quickly inspired by the Holy Ghost doth not so. He falleth not so lightly for a false word. For when he heareth a sharp word of a worldly lover that is said for to bear him down, he feeleth readily in his soul a contrary word sweetly sounding for to lift him up, mightily comforting and sweetly teaching him that he hold forth his purpose and spare for no froward word to do the will of God. And, soothly, *this word of God is a lively word and*

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counsel to forsake all outward business, and for to set him fully to live contemplative life, according to his knowledge and conscience and with good counsel: as fast, their own brethren and their sisters, and all their nearest friends—with many others that know not their stirrings nor that manner of living that they set them to—with a great complaining spirit shall rise upon them, and sharply reprove them, and say that it is nought that they do. And as fast they will reckon up many false tales, and many true also, of the falling of men and women that have given themselves to such life before: and never a good tale of them that stood."

a speedy, sharper than a sword, as the apostle saith;* for it slayeth in a chosen soul all other false words spoken of man contrary thereto. And, therefore, thou that feelest thee called by inward stirring to despise the world and to love God, dread not for a sharp word.

* *Heb.* iv 12.

CHAPTER IV

HOW BY CONTEMPLATION OF THE MANHOOD OF JESU A SOUL IS DELIVERED FROM THE STIRRINGS OF SIN

FOR why, *Scapulis suis obumbrabit tibi, et sub pennis eius sperabis:* "Our Lord shall with his shoulders overshadow thee, and under his feathers thou shalt hope."

The shoulders of our Lord are mercy and soothfastness, under the which he shall overshadow thee. And that is mercifully forgiving thee thy sins and soothfastly giving thee grace of virtues, keeping thee safely from thine enemies as the hen keepeth her birds* under the shadowing of her wings from ravening of the kite.†

* Young birds, chickens, nestlings. This is the only sense in which the word "bird" was used in Old English, and this use of the word is found in literature down to 1600 and survives in northern dialect. (New English Dictionary.)

† MS. "gleede." *Cf. Matt.* xxiii 37: *Jerusalem, Jerusalem, quae occidis prophetas et lapidas eos qui ad te missi sunt, quoties volui congregare filios tuos, quemadmodum gallina congregat pullos suos sub alas, et noluisti.* Richard Rolle also uses this simile in his exposition of Psalm xc. (*The Psalter*, ed. H. R. Bradley, p. 331.)

Or else, the shoulders of our Lord are all the merciful workings shewed to us in his Manhood, under the which thou shalt be shadowed and cooled in thy soul from burning of fleshly desires as thy body may be cooled and refreshed in a shadow from burning of the sun. And therefore, if thou be stirred to pride, to ire, to covetousness, to lechery, or to any other sin, bring into thy mind the meekness of our Lord Jesu, how buxom he was to the will of the Father of heaven, how meek he was to serve his mother and how meek he was in all other things. Refresh thee and ease thee under this shadow of meekness, and take ensample of him. Think also of his mildness, his softness, his patience and his cleanness, his love and his charity, that he shewed to our ensample in all his living and specially in time of his passion: how he spared for no man that he kept not righteousness in word and in work. Flee thou to this precious shadow of his manhood when thou art in temptation and think devoutly on his gracious workings, that thou might take ensample of them in all thy living. And then shall our Lord with his gracious presence shadow thy soul, and feed thee so sweetly with mind of his passion and of his works that thy ghostly enemies shall not burn thee.

And so "Under his feathers shalt thou

hope." The feathers of our Lord be the words of Holy Writ, endited by the Holy Ghost in comfort of chosen souls travailing in murkness of this life. The which words, if they be truly fastened in a meek soul, they bear up the soul from all earthly filth into heavenly conversation as feathers bear birds up into the air. With these words shalt thou defend thee against all sharp words of evil men and against all false words of the fiend. For they shall be so thick set and so well rooted in thy soul that no wicked stirring shall pierce through thine heart for to let thee of thy flight to the love of God, and thou shalt through touching of these words fly up from degree unto degree—that is, from bodily exercise unto ghostly—till thou come to perfection so that thou may see our Lord in the mount of Sion.* Under these words shalt thou hope; for thou shalt trust

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xix, p. 236: "Thus teacheth us the prophet in the psalter: *Soothly the bringer of the law shall give blessing, and they shall go from virtue unto virtue, and God of gods shall be seen in Sion.* The bringer of the law, that is our Lord Jesus Christ, shall give his blessing; that is, he shall give his grace to his chosen souls, calling them from sin and righting them by good works to his likeness; through which grace they shall profit and wax from virtue to virtue till they come to Sion, that is till they come to contemplation, in the which they shall see God of gods, that is, they shall see that there is naught but one God."

fully in them that they are true and patiently abide the fulfilling of all that they promise unto thy last end.

And therefore dread thee nought, but that thou be turned to God. For thou shalt be so well armed with the works and the words of our Lord Jesu (if thou wilt thyself) that thine enemies shall not slay thee. They may perchance touch thee and hurt thee somewhat; but they shall not wound thee deadly, if thou wilt hold thee within thine armour, Jesu.

CHAPTER V

HOW JESU THROUGH GRACIOUS OPENING OF THE GHOSTLY EYE ARMETH THE SOUL AGAINST THE STIRRINGS OF DREAD

AND, nevertheless, yet shall our Lord do more for thee. For *Scuto circumdabit te veritas eius; non timebis a timore nocturno:* "His soothfastness shall go about thee with a shield, and thou shalt not dread the dread of the night."

For our Lord Jesu shall not only arm thee with his shadow of his manhood, but also he as soothfastness shall compass thee with the shield of his Godhead, wonderfully opening the sight of the soul in beholding of him, tenderly touching the affection of thy soul through sweetness of his life, shewing to thee in great reverence the sight of his privities,* shielding thee mightily from thine enemies, and hiding thee in himself so far from their sight that for that time they shall lose thee, and they shall not weet† where thou art till thou fall again to common thinking by the frailty of man. This is the

* Divine or heavenly mysteries.
† Know.

shield of contemplation that is above all armour; for it is above all the wits and the virtues of man and all bodily working, only wrought by the grace of light in a meek soul. Lo, these are thy armours of defence against thine enemies: and, soothly, if thou wilt hold thee therein, thou shalt not dread.

This is the first temptation, sharply assailing a newly turned man to the love of God. That is, dread of the night in the heart of a* man that* is* newly turned to God, or else that* would be delivered from the sins of the world and be turned to God. There fall many sharp dreads for to let him. Him thinketh† sometimes hard for to lose the liking of his youth, and to forbear the love of his friendship and of his fleshly friends. Also he feeleth him so unwise and so weak for dread of temptations that he dare not fully turn him to God. For the frailty of himself is shewed so fully to his sight that him thinketh he might not stand, for dread of poverty and falling into sickness and into other mischiefs through fasting, waking and other penance doing. And also for he seeth oftentimes some turn them awhile to God and after that they fall foul and turn them to the world again. Also he dreadeth the shame and the villainy of the world,

* Inserted to make the passage clear.
† It seemeth to him.

despite and reproof of worldly men. These dreads and many more are stirred by the enemy for to make a weak soul afeared and to smite it down again. And they are called dreads of the night; for a man may not see then the light of soothfastness but is blind with murkness of his conscience. Nevertheless, if thou wilt arm thee well with the works and the words of our Lord Jesu, thou shalt not dread these cold stirrings of dread; but thou shalt meekly and fully hope in the help of God, and stiffly and manly hold forth thy purpose inspired to the love of God.

CHAPTER VI

OF PRIDE, HYPOCRISY AND INRUNNING, AND OF FALSE ILLUMINATIONS FEIGNED BY THE FIEND

And then, not only shalt thou be delivered from this murk dread, but also *A sagitta volante in die, a negotio perambulante in tenebris, ab incursu, et a daemonio meridiano:* "From the arrow flying in the day, from the needs* walking in murkness, from the inrunning,† and from the midday fiend."

The second temptation is an arrow flying in the day, that is, vainglory stirred in the heart of thy good deeds. For as soon as thou forsakest the world and all open sins, and settest thee fully to the deeds of penance and to all other good deeds and virtues, then shall at once rise savour and praising of men without and also beholding of thine own deeds within—that thou doest better than others do. And then beginnest thou to have great dignity‡ of thyself, and thinkest that thou shalt be a perfect man and able to contemplation; and then praisest thou thyself privily, and feedest thyself with this vain

* One's errands or business.
† Incursion, attack (L. *incursus*). ‡ Honour.

joy. But beware of this flying arrow: it flieth full swiftly and entereth in fully softly; but it woundeth deeply if it be not readily perceived. Therefore arm thee well with words and works of our Lord and this arrow shall not hurt thee. Have aye dread of God with reverence and meekness, and keep thee therein unto thy last end be thou never so holy, and thou shalt not dread this flying arrow.*

But after this cometh the third temptation, that is needs walking in murkness. This needs is hypocrisy, that seemeth fair and bright without and is murk within. It

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xxxvii, pp. 338-9: "For then *thou shalt not dread for the night's dread*, that is, thou shalt not dread the spirit of pride, whether he come by night or by day, as the next verse saith after this: *from the arrow flying in the day*. Pride cometh by night to assail a soul when it is despised and reproved of other men, that it should, by that, fall into heaviness and sorrow. It cometh also as an arrow flying in the day, when a man is worshipped and praised of all men, whether it be for worldly doing or for ghostly, that he should have vain joy in himself restingly and false gladness in a passing thing. This is a sharp arrow and a perilous; it flieth swiftly, it striketh softly, but it woundeth deadly. But the lover of Jesus, that stably beholdeth him by devout prayers and busy thinking on him, is so belapped with the secure shield of soothfastness that he dreadeth not, for this arrow may not enter into the soul. For though it come it hurteth not, but glinteth away and passeth forth."

falleth sometimes that a true servant of God is taken up to worship undesired for profit of other men, and therefore the enemy stirreth some other men for to do many good great deeds outwardly and for to seem holy and high in ghostly living, for that intent that they might come to such worships and favours of this world. This is hypocrisy. They love not holiness for itself, but for the worship and the profit that they hope to have by the name of holiness. They will not for nothing do any deed outward in the sight of men wherethrough their name should be lessened. And, when they fall sometimes into any default, they may bear no blame: then had they liefer be dead than to be reproved of their defaults. This hypocrisy is likened to needs or to merchandise. For much business they have in heart how they may increase their worship and their high name by works of holiness. They rest not in the light of grace in love and meekness; but they are aye walking and stirred by unrestful thoughts in murkness of pride. This hypocrisy is a common pestilence and reigning in nearhand every place, among seculars* and regulars,† poor men and rich. For every man, for the corruption of his

* Secular clergy, as distinguished from regular or monks.

† Members of religious Orders observing Rules.

fleshly kind, coveteth for to seem higher than other, and for to have some excellence or worship surpassing other men (if that he might come thereto) either by worldliness or by holiness, unless the grace of God heal him of his sickness. Nevertheless, thou that art called to the service of God, if thou wilt meekly fall thereto God and hope fully in him, he shall shield thee with his works and his words so that thine enemies shall not blind thee in this murkness.*

But after this cometh another yet that is called inrunning. This is a grievous temptation and a violent. For when the fiend seeth that he is put aback by the grace of God in other temptations that he may not speed, he is then all turned into ire and to malice, and presseth upon a chosen soul as he would run upon him as it were a lion for to slay him, and seeketh all that he can how he may dis-ease him by ugliness of dreads or by any other way, bodily or ghostly. But, if thou wilt not be overcome, fall meekly to God, and hold thee in thine arms and abide the first assailing, and thine enemy shall at once flee as it were a coward overcome.†

* *Cf. Bonum Est*, ch. i, pp. 173-4, and *Benedictus*, p. 226, below.

† *Cf. The Treatise of Discerning of Spirits* (*The Cell of Self-Knowledge*, p. 121): " Or else by quaintise of their malicious master, the foul fiend of hell, they are quaintly withdrawn, for he thinketh himself

But then beware of the midday fiend. This is the last temptation, most privy and most perilous, softly assailing chosen souls and high in kind that come as it were to the state of perfection. And it is called the midday fiend, forasmuch as the spirit of murkness cometh like to an angel of light, not in bodily likeness but ghostly, shewing to a soul the highness of himself and of his state in living with a blind pride, and bringeth into a soul wonderful knowings and singular conceits* that seem full true, and make a soul for to ween himself that he is in the highness of contemplation and in the perfection of love, high above the common living of other good men, and that he may therefore live as him liketh, for he is made so high and so free in grace and so burning in love that he shall not sin and that he may not sin. And, overmore, he is so sly in his working

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for to rise with great malice and wrath, as a lion running felly to assail the sickness of our sely souls." *Cf.* also *The Epistle of Privy Counsel*, ch. v, p. 201: "*Et ne paveas repentino timore et irruentes tibi potentias impiorum.* That is, And be not astonied with any unrestful dread, though the fiend (as he will) come with a sudden fearsomeness, pushing and beating on the walls of thy house where thou sittest; or though he stir any of his mighty limbs to rise and to run in upon thee suddenly as it is, without any warning."

* Notions, ideas, thoughts.

that he can shew to a soul that everything that another man doeth and is sin, to him it is virtue and well done, and that it may be fully done if him list.* And of this false light, where it is received, spring out sometimes errors and heresies. And for this he is called a midday fiend; for he sheweth evil and seemeth good. This light of this midday fiend may not lightly be perceived but by shining of righteousness and soothfastness through grace of the Holy Ghost. Nevertheless, one token there is for to know it by. It shineth alway betwixt two black clouds: the one is highness of himself in presumption, coloured under freedom of spirit, and the other is a downcasting of his even-Christians underneath him, deeming them that they have not the grace nor the knowing of soothfastness as he hath. These are the clouds; but these clouds vanish away when the light of grace sheweth. For in the presence of grace is all meekness, softness and cleanness, forgetting of himself and beholding of God. Therefore, if thou wilt not be deceived, have aye meekness, and live in the help of the Highest, and he shall with the shield of soothfastness save thee from the midday fiend and from all others.†

* If he pleaseth.

† *Cf. The Scale of Perfection,* Bk. II, ch. xxvi.

CHAPTER VII

OF DIVERS STIRRINGS OF SIN IN A SOUL

And that shalt thou well feel. For why, *Cadent a latere tuo mille, et decem millia a dextris tuis; ad te autem non appropinquabit:* "A thousand shall fall from thy side, and ten thousand from thy right hand: soothly to thee they shall not nigh." And that the prophet saith no more expressly but of five manner of temptations. Nevertheless, there come, under these and within these, many a thousand others on both sides the man for to let him. On the left side rise a thousand, and on the right side rise ten thousand.

All the stirrings that are bitter and painful —as of ire and envy, impatience, and of slowness—that rise for to drive a man down into over much dread of himself and to great heaviness come upon the left side. And for there be so many in number, therefore they are accounted a thousand; for many doubts and dreads shall a man feel that setteth him fully to God.

Also, all the stirrings that are pleasant and liking—as pride and vainglory, of covetousness, of worldly vanity, of gluttony, of

lechery—that rise on the right side (for they seem favourable and helping to a man as in the world) they are to ten thousand accounted, inasmuch as they are more in number. And also for they are mightier against a man and lightlier overcome him than others do. For it is harder for a man for to escape harmless in weal than in woe, in vain love than in vain dread, in delights and in riches than in poverty and in feebleness.

Much travail shall God's servant have and suffer, and much pain shall he endure* of these ghostly enemies at divers times. Nevertheless, if thou stand stiffly in thy purpose, and rest fully in the help of the Highest and take his works and his words aye before thy sight with the shield of righteousness for thy defence, their† temptations shall fall from thee—as many as there are on both sides of thee—and thine enemy shall not nigh thee.

* MS. " drie." † MS. " And their."

CHAPTER VIII

HOW A SOUL THROUGH GRACIOUS OPENING OF THE GHOSTLY EYE BEHOLDETH GOD IN HIS WORKS

Verumtamen oculis tuis considerabis, et retributionem peccatorum videbis ("Soothly, with thine eyes thou shalt behold, and the payment of sins thou shalt see"), when thou art turned from the love of the world to the love of God and, through long exercise in praying and thinking of God, thou feelest thy conscience much cleansed and well peaced through grace from thy doubts, and thy dreads and thy fleshly desires; that thou feelest them less mighty than they were.

Then thou shalt behold with thine eyes what? Soothly God. For a clean heart shall see God, not bodily but ghostly, and not ghostly in his unchangeable being, what he is as he is, but in his works. For thy inner eye shall be opened through grace of light for to see somewhat of the merciful goodness of God and of his wonderful wisdom, done and shewed to thee about saving of thy soul. And thou shalt wonder at him that he might keep thee so well from

all thy perils. And thou shalt love him that he would help thee so well. And thou shalt see that all the sorrow and travail that thou hast felt was not wrathful smiting of God, nor working of the fiend principally; but it was a tender love of him—that he would draw thee out of sin and depart thy soul from vain love and false rest that thou haddest in this world and in thy fleshliness. For thyself is only the cause of thine own sorrow. If thou had in thee no worldly love, then thou shouldest not be mickle pained* in temptation.†

This shalt thou see and much more. For what manner of beholding‡ a lover shall have in God may I not tell thee. But this I say: that, right as a lover of the world

* Tormented, troubled, distressed.

† *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. xxxix, p. 70: "Our Lord of his endless goodness, having pity and mercy of all his creatures, when he seeth time layeth to his hand, and smiteth down the devil and all his power; and easeth them of their travail, and putteth away all dreads and sorrows and darkness out of their hearts. And he bringeth into their souls light of grace, opening the sight of the soul to see that all the travail that they had was speedful to them, giving them also a new ghostly might to withstand all the fondings of the fiend, and all deadly sins without great travail, and leadeth them into a sadness of good virtuous living. In which if they be meek, he keepeth them unto the last end, and then taketh them all wholly to him."

‡ Contemplation.

hath his beholding with liking of love in worldly good—some in gold, some in silver, some in fair houses and high, some in one thing, some in another—right so the lover of God, that hath the eye of his soul cleansed by grace from all the filth of sins, hath his beholding in God with sweetness of love in ghostly good: that is, in the wonderful workings of our Lord in virtues of soul, in the words of Holy Writ that are opened to his sight (but morally and mistily*) in workings of man's soul, in the blessed kind of angels, and above all this a little in the blessed kind of God (only in shadow). These things shalt thou behold with thine eyes, if they be clean from filth of sin. Thee dare not be idle nor heavy; thou shalt find things enough fair and precious in the ghostly country, wherewithal thou shalt be able to feed the liking of thy ghostly eye.†

And yet, over this, "Thou shalt see by the payment of sins." For, as thou shalt see the merciful goodness of God, shewed to thee and to all chosen souls in Holy Church, right so shalt thou see the strait righteousness of him, in punishing of reproved souls and in paying pain for their sins at the day of doom. But this shalt thou see before the doom come, with the ghostly

* Mystically.

† *Cf. The Scale of Perfection,* Bk. II, ch. xliii.

eye: and thou shalt think it full reasonable. For he that aye would live in sin and lusts of this life, and never have other joy if he might have that—it is rightful that he be after this life in endless pain and never feel joy.*

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xlv, p. 390: "It is fair looking with the inner eye on Jesus in bodily creatures to see his might, his wisdom and his goodness in ordinance of their kind, but it is much fairer looking on Jesus in ghostly creatures. First in reasonable souls chosen and reproved, to see the merciful calling of him to the chosen, how he turneth them from sin by light of his grace; how he helpeth them, teacheth them, chasteneth them, comforteth them; how he righteth, he cleanseth, he feedeth; how he maketh them burning in love and in light by plenty of his grace. And this doth he not to one soul only, but to all his chosen, after measure of his grace. Also of all reproved, how rightfully he forsaketh them and leaveth them in their sins, and doth them no wrong; how he rewardeth them in this world, suffering them to have the fulfilling of their will, and after punisheth them endlessly." *Cf.* also *Bonum Est*, ch. vii, pp. 193-5, below.

CHAPTER IX

THAT A SOUL SHALL HAVE A MEEK TRUST IN GOD ABOVE ALL CREATURES

BUT of this strait doom of God and of this endless payment of sins I shall not dread. *Quoniam tu es, Domine, spes mea; altissimum posuisti refugium tuum:* "For why, Lord, thou art mine hope: thou hast set my refuge in the Highest of all."

Lord, I hope in thee; not in myself, not in my work, nor in my word, nor in my wit, nor in my feeling. For by all these only I am not worthy for to have thee; for they are nought in themselves (if they be well and truly examined) but sin and blindness, as the prophet saith thus: *Lord, all our righteousness is but a cloth of uncleanness.** And therefore I dare not rest in myself, nor in my works with highing of myself; but, Lord, I shall hope only in thy mercy, and hang by thy goodness, and rest in thy love and abide in thy soothfastness. And, nevertheless, yet I shall be as busy as I may for to please thee in work and in word, and in wit and in feeling. And yet, when I have all done,

* *Isa.* lxiv 6.

I will be as naked and as bare from all this (but* only of thy regard) as if I had done right nought.

"For thou, Lord, art only mine hope." Well I wot myself: and I feel the mischief of myself that I am fallen in. And methinketh that no creature may help me out thereof; for they are in the same need that I am in by way of the same kind†—either for to be kept in the bliss that they have that they fall not into this need (as angels and other blessed creatures are) or else for to be brought out of this need (as other souls travailing in this life). Therefore I am driven for to hope principally and fully in him that sufficeth to all and needeth help of none.

For, soothly, "Refuge find I none but in the Highest of all." For, though it be so that there be many creatures higher in grace and in joy than I, nevertheless there is no kind nearer God nor higher than my kind is, but only the blessed kind of God; nor there is no creature so near me, nor may be so near me, nor so goodly nor so helpful to me as the kind of God is. For he may, through his grace, enter into the substance of my

* Except.

† *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. i, p. 176: "But that reforming might not be made by none earthly man, for every man was in the same mischief, and none might suffice to help himself and so much less another man."

soul and make me mighty, witty* and willing† to all goodness; and so may none but he. And therefore will I make him fully my refuge. And, nevertheless, yet shall not I refuse help of a gracious or of a blessed creature as though I needed it not; for I shall desire and pray with mine heart for to have help to my soul of the least creature that is in grace.

* Wise, skilful. † MS. "willi."

CHAPTER X

THAT A SOUL SHALL SEEK GOD IN ITSELF

But, for our Lord is highest in grace and nearest, mightiest and wisest; therefore, all other things left, I will seek him in my soul. He is not far from me; for he saith himself, *The kingdom of heaven is within you**—that is, himself.† And therefore, if thou may through grace any time find him in thee and thee in him, then art thou in a secure refuge, high above earth. Thee dare not dread then the flying arrow nor the midday fiend. For as long as thou may be kept in that high refuge *Non accedat ad te malum, et flagellum non appropinquabit tabernaculo tuo:* "Evil shall not come to thee, and the scourge shall not enter nigh in thy tabernacle."

What is evil to a soul but sin? Soothly, nought else. And that sin is openly pride, when a man leaveth God and liveth to himself. And this is beginning of all sin; for as soon as a man liveth to himself, then enter in all evil stirrings of all vain dreads

* *Luc.* xvii 21.

† *Cf. The Scale of Perfection,* Bk. I, ch. xlvii-l, and Bk. II, ch. xxxiii.

and vain likings of passing things and draw down to vanity of the world.

But thou, lover of God, that thou be not overlaid by this evil, flee to thy refuge. Withdraw thee, as much as thou may, from all fleshly mirths, from all acquaintance, from companies of worldly men, and cast all the world under thy feet. And think that all things shall pass, thou wot never how soon: and make thee poor in thine heart, as if thou had right nought. And draw thee then by thine own, and spere* the windows of thy bodily wits (if thou may) and seek our Lord in thy thought.† Pray him devoutly, ask him grace trustfully, praise him and commend him reverently and stably and assiduously. Press upon him at divers times, till thou feel thy conscience cleared and thy ghostly eye opened in beholding of him as he will shew him: so that thou may freely and restfully think on him, with sweet affections of love meeking in thy soul. And when it is thus with thee, or else better, then art thou in thy refuge. Keep thee therein soberly, and lose not it recklessly. For whiles thou art in thine high refuge evil shall not hurt thee. For the feeling of grace is so much and so comfortable in a clean soul that it keepeth out all evil stirrings, that

* Shut up.

† *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. lxxviii.

they may not sink therein. They proffer them, but they may not enter: but at once they pass away; for the presence of our Lord is so nigh and so favourable that it is none hardness nor mastery for to flee sin whiles the grace lasteth.

"And the scourge shall not nigh in thy tabernacle." A tabernacle* is only for fighting men: and for the whiles thou livest in this world, thou shalt be aye fighting; therefore our Lord is to thee a tabernacle in defence of thee against strokes and storms of thy ghostly enemies. Flee, therefore, by highness of thought and fervent desire into this tabernacle, and bide thee with our Lord and keep thee within that thou pass not out. Have him aye in thy sight reverently, and occupy thee in him busily with holyday works.†

* Tent (adoption of F. *tabernacle*; adaptation of L. *tabernaculum*, tent, booth, shed; diminutive of *taberna*, hut, booth). Used first in special sense meaning the curtained tent, containing the Ark of the Covenant and other sacred appointments, which served as the portable sanctuary of the Israelites during their wandering in the wilderness and afterwards till the building of the Temple. (New English Dictionary.)

† *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xli, p. 366: "We should covet to feel ever the lively inspiration of grace made by the ghostly presence of Jesus in our soul, if we might; and to have him in our sight with reverence, and ever feel the sweetness of his love by a wonderful homeliness of his presence." *Cf.* also *Bonum Est*, ch. xi, p. 212.

And, soothly, the scourge — that is, the fiend—shall not harm thee nor nigh thee. The fiend is a scourge to all lovers of the world, felly smiting them by desires of sins. But they feel not the pain of the stroke till the last end come: then shall it smart insufferably that now is likingly felt. This is *the scourge leant over all the earth*, as the prophet saith;* for all men that are out of this tabernacle it over-flieth with bodily sin, or else hurteth them with venial sin. But thou, lover of God, whiles other men run out, and flit† and strive, swear and beguile, jape‡ and jangle,§ play and sing, hold thee still in thy tabernacle; and thou shalt be in peace securely, healed by the shadow of our Lord from the knot of this scourge.

* *Isa.* xxviii 15. † Contend.
‡ Trick, beguile, fool, deceive.
§ Contend, dispute, wrangle.

CHAPTER XI

OF THE BLESSED KIND OF ANGELS

Quoniam angelis suis mandavit de te, ut custodiant te in omnibus viis tuis: "For why, he hath sent to his angels of thee that they keep thee in all thy ways." Much tenderness of love sheweth our Lord to thee that art his lover. For he commandeth, not to one angel but to many angels, that they keep thee in all thy ways (that is, in all thy works, thy words and thy thoughts) as much as in them is. They may not make the light of grace in thy soul, for that falleth to God only himself; for he, through his unseeable presence maketh might, light and love and giveth to thy soul. But angels by their presence ghostly shall help thee and comfort thy soul much when thou art in this grace. For they stop out this press of unclean spirits. They cleanse the soul from fantasies and vain imaginations, and they form fair likenesses in words and in reasons and temper the light of grace sufferably in feeding of thy soul. They stir thine heart to the love of all goodness, and, if thou offend by frailty, readily they blame thee: thou shalt bear it no further,

for they will suffer no sin to rest in thee. They comfort thee in bodily disease and tell thee of the joys of heaven wondrous privily, that thou should not think too heavy the prison of this life. Nought else do then but get a clean heart (if thou may), namely, from the love of sin, and hold thee in thy tabernacle. And what comfort and help thou shalt have then of angels ghostly I can not tell thee; thou shalt wit by assay better than by my word. For the wise man saith that *a soul of the righteous man is heaven and the siege* of our Lord.*† And, soothly, whereso heaven is there are angels. Then,‡ if thou may find through grace the ghostly presence of our Lord in thy soul, then is thy soul heaven, all beset with presence of angels in keeping of thee.§

* Throne.

† *Prov.* xxv 5: *Et firmabitur iustitia thronus eius.*

‡ Therefore.

§ *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xlvi, pp. 393-4: "Then beginneth the soul to have great acquaintance of the blessed spirits, and a great fellowship. They are full tender and full busy about such a soul to help it, they are masters to teach it, and often, through their ghostly presence and touching of their light, they drive out fantasies from the soul. They illumine the soul graciously, they comfort the soul by sweet words suddenly sounded in a clean heart; and, if any dis-ease fall ghostly, they serve the soul and minister to it all that it needeth. Thus St Paul said of them: *Wot ye not well that*

For *In manibus portabunt te ne forte offendas ad lapidem pedem tuum:* "In their hands they shall bear thee, lest haply thou hurt thy foot at a stone."

Angels shall bear thee up—not thy body from the earth with bodily hands, for they have none; but thy soul from sin of earthly love with ghostly hands (the which hands are ghostly touchings, ghostly shinings and ghostly speakings betwixt them and a clean soul).* For with these hands they bear up a soul into heavenly conversation; they

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all holy spirits are ministers, sent of Jesus for them that take the heritage of health. These are chosen souls. As who saith yes. For wit thou well that all this ghostly working of words and of reasons brought to the mind, and such fair likeness, are made by the ministering of angels, when the light of grace abundantly shineth in a clean soul. It may not be told by tongue, the feelings, the lightenings, the graces and comforts in special, that clean souls perceive through favorable fellowship of blessed angels. The soul is well at ease with them to behold how they do, that it would attend to nought else." *Cf.* also *Eight Chapters on Perfection*, ch. iv, p. 97, above.

* *Cf. The Song of Angels* (*Cell of Self-Knowledge*, pp. 66-7): "When a soul is purified by the love of God, illumined by wisdom, stabled by the might of God, then is the eye of the soul opened to behold ghostly things, as virtues and angels and holy souls, and heavenly things. Then is the soul able because of cleanness to feel the touching, the speaking of good angels. This touching and speaking, it is ghostly and not bodily."

defend mightily a soul from fiends and wisely teach it, that it fall not into errors or into heresies; they comfort it in tribulation and feed it with devotion.

"Lest haply thou hurt thy foot at a stone." Thy foot is thy love; for where thy foot is, there is thy soul.* The stone is our Lord: as the apostle saith, *Christ is a stone.*† And, therefore, unless our Lord fulfil thy soul through presence of his grace within, and his angels through their ghostly presence keep thee without, without doubt thou shalt stumble at the stone. For thy love shall crook‡ to thyself fleshly, and to worldly vanity: and then is thy foot hurt and the stone hath none harm. For, when thou through blindness of thyself offendest God in inordinate love to any creature, he is never the worse: he is not stirred by wrath as it were a man. But thou hast harm. And, soothly, if ever thou had any tenderness of love to God, thou shalt full soon feel it. There is no better master for to tell thee that thou art hurt than the feeling of health before. But the lover of the world felt never yet the health of ghostly love, and therefore he perceiveth not the hurting of

* *Cf. Eight Chapters on Perfection*, ch. vii, p. 104, footnote ||, above.

† 1 *Pet.* ii 6-8.

‡ Turn or bend aside out of the right course.

his soul: he feeleth no pain of worldly love as God's lovers do. And therefore, thou, God's lover, if thou feel thy foot hurt at the stone by frailty, suffer it not to fester; but seek medicine of our Lord,* and fall meekly to him in thy thought with reverence and love, and fall no more so lightly out of the angels' hands, but hold thee with them.

* *Cf. Benedictus*, p. 222, below.

CHAPTER XII

OF DIVERS PROPERTIES OF THE FIEND

AND then *Supra aspidem et basiliscum ambulabis, et conculcabis leonem et draconem:* "Upon the snake and the basilisk thou shalt go, and thou shalt tread the lion and the dragon." These four beasts, by divers properties, betoken the fiend in himself and in his limbs. The snake (that is a water adder) stingeth privily and slayeth with his venom. The basilisk (that is the king of adders and may not be charmed) slayeth openly far from a man with his venomous sight and blowing of his breath. The lion (that is king of beasts) overcometh them all by mastery. The dragon devoureth by slyness* them that are reckless and keep not themselves. Right so the fiend, by wicked suggestions of himself or by false backbitings of his limbs, stingeth a soul venomously; and so is he as a snake. Also he is as a basilisk for the blowing of errors and heresies in his limbs. He slayeth many souls as it were from fear. For right as the venomous breath of the basilisk entereth into that body

* Craft, cunning.

that he first seeth, and corrupteth him and bringeth him to the death; right so the word of an heretic, blown by the fiend, entereth into the soul of the hearer, and maketh venom the soul wondrous subtly, that a man feeleth it not till he be dead, unless grace be his tabernacle. And therefore it is wondrous perilous for to hear the words of an heretic; for they are contagious, and wondrous deeply sink into a soul that is void of grace. Flee the word of them as the breath of a basilisk, if thou wilt not be hurt. And yet fareth the fiend sometimes as it were a lion, constraining them with mastery that are his limbs, bounden to him for to do as he liketh. He hath them all at his will, that they dare not once say nay. They are so chained together with love of this world that they have no might nor will for to gainstand him. They dread him as a little beast doth a lion, and fall down at his feet at the least looking of him when he stirreth them by sin.* And

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xiv, p. 219: "The proud man is turned into a lion for pride, for he would be dreaded and worshipped of all men, and that no man withstand the fulfilling of his fleshly will, neither in word nor in deed. And if any man would let his misproud will, he waxeth fell and wroth, and will be wreaked of him as a lion wreaketh him on a little beast. The man that doth this is no man, for he doth unreasonably to the kind of man, and so he is turned and transformed into a lion."

yet, overmore, the fiend is a dragon that through privy sleights devoureth reckless souls, the which take no keep of themselves—such, namely, as are dry from the moisture of grace,* and feign them false security and have no dread of God. But, nevertheless, thou, lover of God, that art called the righteous man, thou shalt through grace of God be holden in meekness and strengthened by the presence of God, guarded by the fellowship of angels. And then shalt thou tread upon the snake and upon the basilisk, the lion and the dragon, and cast them all under thy feet. For right as our Lord God in his manhood suffered the fiend for to assay him by all the sleights that he could, and yet wisely and reasonably he overcame him; right so shall he through his endless mercy overcome the fiend in all chosen souls that are his limbs, fastened to him in love and charity, and more specially then in him that is his lover, chosen to his service.

* *Cf.* St Gregory: *Aquis gratiae Deus universa irrigat. Universitatis nomine homo signatur.* (*Moral. Lib.* VI. *in Caput* v, *B. Job, Caput* xvi 20.) This expression occurs also in slightly varied forms in *The Cloud of Unknowing* and in *The Scale of Perfection.*

CHAPTER XIII

HOW JESU SHEWETH HIM TO HIS LOVER

But, good Lord, whereto doest thou so mercifully to thy servant? Soothly, *Quoniam in me speravit liberabo eum; protegam eum, quoniam cognovit nomen meum:* "For he hoped in me, I shall deliver him: I shall defend him, for he knew my name."*

He that despiseth himself as he hath been and as he is of himself soothfastly, and hath no esteem of himself, nor vain joy; but fully hopeth in and doeth no deed wilfully for to offend me—I shall deliver him from his enemies. *I shall depart with him the gifts of the Holy Ghost,*† and I shall make him free and willing for to love me.

And, "For he knew my name, I shall defend him." Lovers of this world knew not my name, for they knew not me. They say I am no God; for I am not rightful, or I am not merciful, or I am not wise. For they ween that I see not what they do, or I take no keep of them; nor that I will not

* For the style of the last three chapters of this treatise *cf. The Scale of Perfection,* Bk. II, ch. xxxvi, pp. 329-30.

† *Heb.* vi 4.

punish them howsoever they do. These men know me not. Also other men there are that know half my name—as are these that know me and love me as a man, but not fully as God. They think most on my manhood and feel most comfort therein. These are no lovers of the world; but they are beginners of my love. But he that knoweth my full name—that I am Jesu God—he knoweth me and he loveth me; for my name is both God and Man.* He knoweth my name, through the light of my grace given unto him, as sovereign goodness, sovereign wisdom, sovereign might, endless being, blessed life and joy unspeakable.† He knoweth my name; for I am all this. I do all things that I do wisely, and goodly and rightfully: and there is nothing done by no creature but at my will, either approving or suffering. And as mine approving of

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xxx, pp. 296-301.

† *Cf. Qui Habitat*, ch. xv, p. 167, and *Bonum Est*, ch. xi, p. 213, below. *Cf.* also *The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xxxii, p. 308: "But he seeth him that he is an unchangeable being; sovereign might, sovereign soothfastness, sovereign goodness, a blessed life, an endless bliss." *Cf.* also *The Song of Angels* (*Cell of Self-Knowledge*, p. 64): "Our Lord God is an endless being without changing, almighty without failing, sovereign wisdom, light, soothness without error or darkness; sovereign goodness, love, peace and sweetness."

all good deeds of all good men is good and rightful, right so my suffering of all evil deeds of evil men is good and rightful, though the doers be unrightful. And also, there falleth no tribulation, nor anguish, nor none other thing to none of my chosen children, but at my will for their profit. And, for he that is my lover knoweth thus fully my name, that I am as I am, and loveth me so tenderly for I am as I am, and holdeth him fully paid aye with me, whatsoever I do to him or to any creature, be it ease or unease, weal or woe; for him thinketh that I am so good that I may not do evil, nor that I will do none evil, and him thinketh that I please him in all my works, and he looketh after none other thing but fulfilling of my will; therefore, soothly, *I shall defend him.** *I shall maintain him against all his enemies*:† and, *since he knoweth me, I shall know him*‡ and *mark him with my name*,§ I shall make him mighty against all sins, and I shall make him witty and wise in sight of soothfastness, and *I shall give him the gift of love that is the Holy Ghost*,‖ and *I shall make him safe.*¶

* *Zach.* ix 15. *Cf. Bonum Est*, ch. xi, below.
† *Ps.* civ 24.
‡ *Matth.* x 32 and *Luc.* xii 8.
§ *Apoc.* xiv 1 and xxii 4.
‖ *Acta* ii 38.
¶ *Ps.* cxliv 19.

And then beareth he my name Jesu: for my name is Jesu (that is, Saviour). I am Jesu Saviour as God, and I am Jesu Mediator as Man: one Person both God and Man. Thus knoweth my lover me.

CHAPTER XIV

HOW JESU COMFORTETH THE SOUL OF HIS LOVER

AND also for *Clamavit ad me, et ego exaudiam eum; cum ipso sum in tribulatione; eripiam eum, et glorificabo eum.* "He cried to me: I shall hear him. I am with him in tribulation: I shall deliver him and I shall glorify him."

He cried to me not only by voice of the mouth, for that cry is common to good and to bad; but by desire of heart. For a meek desire to God in a clean heart is a great cry in the ears of God sometimes when the tongue is still.* For he that is meek in spirit, true without delaying or feigning, full of reverent dread of me, feeling the feebleness of himself, busily praying and thinking on me, Jesu, having no savour nor liking in the world, hungering all manner of righteousness, trusting only the presence of me by the grace of love—soothly, he crieth to me with a wondrous high voice, for all his life in word, in will, and in work is a continual cry upstying† to me; and therefore I shall

* *Cf. Mixed Life*, ch. xiii, p. 44, above.
† Ascending.

hear him and favourably help him, while the word is in his mouth. I shall be with him. I shall get him what he asketh. I shall nothing deny him, for he crieth after nothing but after me. He asketh neither after house nor land, worships nor riches, nor worldly good, nor he asketh no singular gift of prophecy, nor working of miracles, nor none such thing of holiness other than is needful and helpful to grace: but only he asketh me for me, for to see me and love me, for I suffice to him alone and nothing else without me; and therefore I shall hear him and be with him in tribulation.

But, good Lord, what tribulation may thy servant feel to whom thou art so favourable and so helpful, and makest him for to know thee and love thee so tenderly, and comfortest him so graciously with thy blessed presence? Yes, he shall always have tribulation in some manner wise, no man more. For all the feeling of this bodily life is to him tribulation in some manner wise.* The more comfort he feeleth sometimes of my blessed love, the more painful is to him sometimes any touching of love that is contrary thereto; for the affection of my love is clean and so tender in the heart of my servant that it may suffer none uncleanness. A little hurting of sin to him is

* *Cf. Bonum Est*, ch. iii, p. 181, below.

wondrous painful. And for he may not escape all clean from sin, but all day is touched and defiled with corruption of fleshly kind, therefore he is aye in tribulation, not painfully nor grudgingly striving against me, for I am with him full securely in his tribulation. I bear him up with my might, and that knoweth he full well, for I shew it him and comfort him with my presence when I vouchsafe, or else he should despair. And so leadeth he his life in a mourning mirth, in weal and woe, in a glad sorrow and in tribulation that is comfortable: and this shall be his life unto the time that bodily death come. But then shall I take him out of the prison of this life, from all the fiend's danger, and from all his travail and his woe, and I shall glorify him, bringing his soul first into blissful rest, and afterward at the last day his body glorified into joyful undeadliness.*

* Immortality.

CHAPTER XV

OF THE GHOSTLY SIGHT OF JESU IN THE BLISS OF HEAVEN

AND *Longitudinem dierum adimplebo eum et ostendam illi salutare meum:* "In length of days I shall fulfil him, and shall shew to him mine health."

The length of days is the endlessness of blessed life, not changing under time of diverse days: but it shall be alway day and one day. Nevertheless, this day is likened to the length of many days, for it is longer than all timeful days. And with the length of this day that is aye lasting I shall fulfil him.

I shall be his light and his sun full shining to him; for I shall then shew to him fully mine health (that is, Jesu).* Then shall I shew to him openly that I am Jesu. As long as he is in this body of sin he may not see me as I am, for I shew me not to him in my blessed being: *he might not suffer me*

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. xliv, p. 81: "For this name Jesus is nought else to say in English but healer or health." *Cf.* also *Benedictus*, pp. 219 and 230, below.

and live, as Holy Writ saith.* But, for he troweth in me fully that I am as I am and a little I shew him of me hid under a veil of fair likeness,† and by that murk sight I draw his love to me and make him for to love me that he seeth not; therefore I shall shew me to him. Then his love toucheth me nearer than his sight doeth. For when knowing faileth for weakness of reason, then is love mightiest and highest in his working through inspiring of my grace.‡ And forasmickle as he desireth so much for to see me as I am —that I am Jesu Saviour, sovereign might, sovereign wisdom and sovereign goodness§—

* *Exod.* xxxiii 20.

† *Cf. Bonum Est*, ch. x, p. 208, below.

‡ *Cf. The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. viii, p. 33: "For why, love may reach to God in this life, but not knowing"; and ch. lxx, p. 164: "For have a man never so much ghostly understanding in knowing of all made ghostly things, yet may he never by the work of his understanding come to the knowing of an unmade ghostly thing: the which is nought but God. But by the failing he may. Because that thing that he faileth in is nothing else but only God."

Cf. also *An Epistle of Discretion* (*Cell of Self-Knowledge*, pp. 108-9): "By reason we may trace how mighty, how wise, and how good he is in his creatures, but not in himself; but ever when reason defaileth, then list, love, live and learn, to play, for by love we may feel him, find him, and hit him, even in himself." *Cf.* also *The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xxxiv, and *Bonum Est*, ch. v, p. 186, below.

§ *Cf. Qui Habitat*, ch. xiii, p. 160, above, and *Bonum Est*, ch. xi, p. 213, below.

and shineth so bright to my sight; therefore *I shall* shew me to him fully in my full bliss and *fulfil his desire.** *I shall speak openly to him, not in proverbs.*† *For whoso loveth me, I shall love him and I shall shew me to him.*‡

* *Ps.* cxliv 19. † *Joan.* xvi 25.
‡ *Joan.* xiv 21.

IV

HERE BEGINNETH BONUM EST

CHAPTER I

HOW BY SHRIFT A SOUL IS CLEANSED AND MADE ABLE TO THE LOVE OF GOD

BONUM est confiteri Domino, et psallere nomini tuo altissime: "It is good to shrive to our Lord, and sing to thy name, thou Highest of all."*

No man may live in this life so that he never shall sin sometimes; and therefore it is good for each man to shrive him to our Lord and sing to his name. Shrift goeth before, and song cometh after; by shrift is the soul cleansed, and through singing is it kept in cleanness. He shriveth to our Lord that meekly ascribeth all goodness to God and all sins to himself—as he that by grace seeth his own faults and is glad that he seeth them, and made no force† though all men knew them as fully as himself doeth (be so that no man were shamed nor slandered by them but himself), and is in full will for to shew him even as he is to his ghostly father without feigning or excusing—he shriveth him to our

* *Ps.* xci 2. † Cared not.

Lord. For the sight that he hath of his sins through grace, that is a very shrift to God, be the sin much or little. And in that sight is the sin forgiven—so that he shrive him to his priest at the bidding of Holy Church if the sin were deadly, else, if it be venial it needeth not. This sight is then true and gracious when the soul is contrite and fully forsaketh them. For he seeth so much goodness (of the mercy of God) that he shameth himself and fully despiseth himself. This shrift maketh a clean conscience, and maketh a soul able for to sing to our Lord.*

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. vii, and ch. xxi, pp. 245-6: "The beginning of the high way in the which thou shalt go is reforming in faith, grounded meekly in the faith and in the laws of Holy Church, as I have said before; for trust securely, that though thou have sinned herebefore, if thou be now reformed by the sacrament of penance after the law of Holy Church, thou art in the right way." *Cf.* also *The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. xxviii, p. 75: "But if thou ask me when they shall work in this work, then I answer thee and say: not till they have cleansed their conscience of all their special deeds of sin done before, according to the common ordinance of Holy Church." *Cf.* also *The Epistle of Privy Counsel*, ch. ii, p. 185: "And therefore, I pray thee, do no more now in this case; but think simply that thou art as thou art, be thou never so foul nor so wretched, so that thou have beforetimes (as I suppose that thou hast) been lawfully amended of all thy sins in special and in general, after the true counsel of Holy Church.

And therefore it is good to shrive to our Lord, and first after "to sing to thy name, thou Highest of all." He singeth to thy name that in will, in word and in work serveth thee and pleaseth thee only for thee, not for worldly good nor for worship of his own name. Him thinketh it reward enough for to do well and be thy servant. Some sing "Lord," but not to thy name; the which will neither sing nor serve thee, but for great meed of benefice or of worship or of bodily sustenance. They serve thee more for dread that they lose not their worldly profit than for love of thy name. These men sing to themselves and not to thee. They love not thee for thee, but for thy gifts: and they love thy gifts more than thee; for, if thou withdraw thy gifts, they grudge against thee and will not serve thee. Their conscience is not clean from covetousness of the world; and therefore they can not sing to thy name, cry they never so high. But a clean soul singeth to thy name, for he loveth thee. Him list for to sing to thee in will and in work, for that is good to him. It is liefer to him* to sing to thee without

For else shalt thou never, nor any other by my consent, be so bold as to take upon thee this work." *Cf.* also *Mixed Life*, ch. xiii, p. 45, above, and *Qui Habitat*, ch. ii, p. 118, above.

* He had rather.

reward of any earthly good, than for to have all benefices and worships and earthly goods and not be able to sing to thee. For why, for to sing to thee in good works, in good thoughts and in burning love is his life and his comfort, his mirth and his solace.*

* With this passage *cf. Qui Habitat*, ch. vi, pp. 133-5, above, and *Benedictus*, p. 226, below. This chapter shows the influence of Richard Rolle.

CHAPTER II

THAT A SOUL SHALL LOVE GOD ALIKE IN CONSOLATION AND IN DESOLATION

And also *Ad annuntiandum mane misericordiam tuam, et veritatem tuam per noctem:* "For to shew thy mercy at morn, and thy soothfastness by night."

By morn is understood light of grace by presence of our Lord. Thy righteous man sheweth thy mercy at morn. For all the good that he doth, and all the grace that he feeleth, he ascribeth to thy mercy only: the might that he hath for to despise the liking of the world, and to forsake all wickedness with lightness and gladness of heart; the sight that he hath in knowing of himself and of soothfastness; the love and the liking that he hath in virtues and in all good deeds; and, over this also, the prospect of grace in devotion, ghostly savour and heavenly sweetness, great comforts and* special visitations of God, gracious illuminations and other ghostly feelings—the which are all likened to the morn, for they make a soul shining in light and in love. And these he ascribeth

* Omitted from *Lambeth MS.* 472.

not to his deserts, but only to the mercy of God; and that he sheweth (for he knoweth it truly) to God, and telleth it meekly to man. For when he fareth well (as in his feelings both bodily and ghostly) through plenty of grace, then thinketh him all wounden and lapped in the mercy of God; he wondereth and loveth all his goodnesses; all thing pleaseth and nothing misliketh, for the mercy of God turneth all thing into softness.*

And also "For to shew thy soothfastness by night." Night betokeneth adversity and

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xxxvi, pp. 330-1: "See then and behold what love worketh in a chosen soul that he reformeth in feeling to his likeness, when the reason is lightened a little to the ghostly knowing of Jesus and to the feeling of his love. Then bringeth love into the soul the fulhead of virtues, and turneth them all into softness and into liking, as it were without working of the soul; for the soul striveth not much for the getting of them as it did before, but it hath them easily and feeleth them restfully only through the gift of love that is the Holy Ghost. And that is a well great gladness and comfort unspeakable, when it feeleth suddenly—and wotteth never—how the virtue of meekness and patience, sobriety and sadness, chastity and cleanness, love to his even-Christians and all other virtues (the which were to him sometime travailous, painful and hard to keep) are now turned into softness and liking and into wonderful lightness; so far forth that he thinketh it no mastery nor no hardness to keep any virtue, but it is most liking for him to keep it. And all this maketh love."

wanting of comfort, bodily or ghostly; as when it seemeth that grace is withdrawn and leaveth a soul in murkness. But blessed is he that dare well abide in this murkness and sheweth the righteousness of God. And in a great* trust, without venomous dreads, or doubts, or any grudgings against him, thus doeth the righteous man. For when the feeling of grace in some manner is withdrawn, devotion and compunction are wrested from him, sweet affections and special comforts are as they were lost, and he is left as naked and poor as a man that were robbed of all the goods that he had to his bare skin, and it seemeth God [had forsaken him and forgotten him and]† had no love‡ for him. He turneth not again to love of the world, for that he may not [nor he would not]:† he might have no liking therein with rest of his heart. He is not angry against God, deeming in him hardness, nor he despaireth not in himself for dread of his wickedness, for it is all forgiven. But he abideth in this murk night, and sheweth to thee, Lord, full trustily, thy soothfastness. He thinketh that thus should it be here in this life, for this is soothfastness. He knoweth well that grace is withdrawn from him on one manner, but

* *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 reads "good."
† Omitted from *Lambeth MS.* 472.
‡ MS. "deynte."

it is given to him on another manner as God will; not so sweetly nor feelably as it was, but more privily, mightily, and more godly. He holdeth him paid as it is, and will none other wise have it but even as God will. In this night is much light, but it shineth not. It shall shine when the night is passed over and the full day sheweth. And so, Lord, shall the righteous man shew him to thee, thy mercy and soothfastness.*

* With this chapter *cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. xxxvii and Bk. II, ch. xli; and *The Epistle of Privy Counsel*, ch. xii. See also p. lii of the Introduction above.

CHAPTER III

THAT A SOUL SHALL DESIRE NOUGHT BUT THE WILL OF GOD

In decachordo psalterio, cum cantico, in cithara, "With a ten-stringed psaltery, with song on the harp," the righteous man maketh mirth* to our Lord God.

For he sheweth to him his mercy and his soothfastness on a ten-stringed psaltery—that is, in fulfilling of his commandments. And that is the first fit† of his mirth: for to keep and to love all thine biddings‡ (for that needeth to be done) the which are comprehended under ten; for in them are all others understood. What that our Lord forbiddeth him he will not do, and that that he biddeth do under pain of deadly sin he is ready for to do.

And after this he maketh mirth with song on the harp—that is, with charity in chastity.

* Musical entertainment, melody.

† A part or section of a poem or song, a canto, a strain of music, a stave.

‡ Commands.

Charity is the song, and chastity is the harp; for not only he keepeth the biddings, but also setteth him for to hold his counsels.* He forsaketh fully the lust of this world, and offereth him entirely in will and work to the service of God, and feeleth through grace his conscience clean from sin, strengthened by security of love, and keepeth him chaste; and he attempereth him in his body by discreet continence from all fleshly likings. He singeth well on the harp, for he liketh chastely. The harp without song pleaseth not, nor† chastity without love helpeth not; but love alone sufficeth. He that most loveth God singeth highest. And, soothly, he most loveth God that through grace is most departed from the love of this world. And that is not for that he hath most fervour or most devotion in tears, or in prayers, or in such feelable comforts; but for he hath least of pride and most of meekness, most might, most strength‡ against sin and all that may fall, and least feeleth of painful doubts and dreads and insecurity; and for he most wisely knoweth God, and most

* The counsels of perfection or the evangelical counsels—*i.e.*, the three obligations of voluntary poverty, chastity, and obedience to a religious superior.

† *Lambeth MS.* 472 reads " for."

‡ *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 reads: " most might and strength."

stably lasteth in trust of him, whatso he sendeth; and for that he is never angry nor wroth, nor stirred through frowardness of will against God nor man; and also for he feeleth no desire in himself, scarcely, to anything that is, but holdeth him paid with all as it is, full lovingly abiding the will of our Lord, least craving of God in special, and most having of him in general; that beareth his bodily life as a cross on his back, mightily with patience, aye ready for to die when his time cometh;* that hath lost savour of this world, and liveth in continual longing to heavenly bliss. He thus most loveth God. He yieldeth a sweet melody† in the ears of our Lord. Thus

* *Cf. The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. xliv, p. 107: "Insomuch that he weepeth and waileth, striveth, curseth and denounceth himself; and (shortly to say) he thinketh that he beareth so heavy a burthen of himself that he careth never what betides him, so that God were pleased." *Cf.* also *The Epistle of Privy Counsel*, ch. viii, p. 216: "Yea, Jesu help thee then, for then hast thou need. For all the woe that may be without that, is not a point to that. For then is thyself a cross to thyself. And this is true working and the way to our Lord, as he himself saith: 'Let him bear his cross,' first in the painfulness of himself, and after 'follow me' into bliss, or into the mount of perfection, tasting the softness of my love in goodly feeling of myself." *Cf.* also *Qui Habitat*, ch. xiv, p. 164, above.

† The principal part in a harmonised piece of music.

merrily singeth the righteous man, as the prophet saith.*

* St Augustine has the following passage on this verse of Psalm xci: *In decachordo psalterio, cum cantico in cithara. Decachordum psalterium non modo audistis. Decachordum psalterium significat decem praecepta Legis. Sed cantare in illo opus est, non portare psalterium. Nam et Judaei habent Legem ; portant, non psallunt. Qui sunt qui psallunt ? Qui operantur ? Parum est : qui operantur cum tristitia, nondum psallunt. Qui sunt qui psallunt ? Qui cum hilaritate faciunt bene, in psallendo enim hilaritas est. Et quid dicit Apostolus ? Hilarem enim datorem diligit Deus* (2 *Cor.* ix 7). *Quidquid facis, cum hilaritate fac : bonum tunc et bene facis. Si autem cum tristitia facis, fit de te, non facis ; et portas magis psalterium, non cantas. In psalterio decachordo, cum cantico in cithara ; hoc est, verbo et opere. Cum cantico, verbo ; in cithara, opere. Si verba sola dicis, quasi canticum solum habes, citharam non habes : si operaris, et non loqueris, quasi solam citharam habes. Propter hoc et loquere bene, et fac bene, si vis habere canticum cum cithara.* (*Enarr. in Psalmum* xci 5.) Both this chapter and the following chapter show the influence of Richard Rolle.

CHAPTER IV

HOW A SOUL SHALL BEHOLD GOD IN HIS WORKS

And that is no marvel though he sing so well, *Quia delectasti me, domine, in factura tua; et in operibus manuum tuarum exsultabo:* "For why, Lord, thou hast delighted me in thy making, and in the works of thine hands I shall joy."

The ditty of my song, Lord, is the making of me, in which thou hast delighted me. For I am glad that I am as I am. That thou hast made me, me liketh well, be my being not only as it is now, but as I shall be. And for that thou hast made me, of thy goodness, to thine image and thy likeness, I am greatly delighted; for by that have I knowing that I am takeably* of thee, and may have thee endlessly in joy and in bliss, and not die with the body as a beast unreasonable.†

* Adverb of takeable, meaning can or may be taken.

† *Cf. The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. xliv, p. 107: "And yet in all this sorrow he desireth not to un-be: for that were devil's madness and despite unto God. But he liketh right well to be; and he giveth full heartily thanks unto God, for the worthiness and the gift of his being, although he desire unceasingly for to lack the knowing and the feeling of his being."

And therefore shall I enjoy in thine works of thine hands. Thy wonderful works are the notes of my song. A chaste lover of God joyeth to our Lord in mind of his works with sweetness of love. And the more worthy that the work is in shewing of his might and of his goodness, the more is the mirth, and the higher he singeth when grace toucheth him. Much might shewed our Lord in making of the world and of all bodily creatures; but much more shewed he in making of ghostly creatures (as angels and souls). And also much wisdom and goodness shewed our Lord in saving and helping of all bodily creatures, but much more in saving and helping of man's soul. This is good mirth to a clean soul: for to have a lovely beholding of God in his mightful works, and so for to know him and for to love him first by a mean,* and by this mean be drawn into a higher for to know and love him in himself without mean of works or of words, for that is the higher song. The one cometh after the other, sing whoso may; for grace is mistress: it doeth all these in a meek soul.

* A middle or intermediate part of any harmonised composition or performance.

CHAPTER V

THAT LOVE TOUCHETH GOD WHERE KNOWING FAILETH

Quam magnificata sunt opera tua, domine! nimis profundae factae sunt cogitationes tuae: "Lord, how wondrous great are thy works: full deep are thy thoughts made."

Wondrous much are thy works, Lord, in bodily creatures (as in heaven and in earth and in all the elements): but much more in ghostly creatures; for the work is more in making of a soul reasonable than it is of all* bodily thing, for it is worthier in kind. But most art thou yet in thyself; and by the mickleness of thy works may I know that thou art wondrous much in might, in wisdom and in goodness, endlessly above all thy works. Thy works are my book for to know thee by; for thy works may I see, and know thee in them. But I may not see thee in thy blessed kind, what thou art in thyself; my sight faileth, my wit and reason wanteth† there, though it be lightened through grace. Lord, thus far may I see thee and know thee:

* *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 reads "a."
† Faileth.

and that is, that I may not take thee under my knowing. The better that I see thee through grace, the more unknown art thou to me, and the further fleest thou from me. But, nevertheless, where knowing faileth, there love hitteth. That that I know not, that love I best. For when my thought is withdrawn through grace from beholding of all creatures and all special works of God, that I see nothing, then love I best the Maker of all thing. I know thee more in thy works than I do in thyself; but I love thee better in thyself than I do in thine works. My love and my troth may touch thee and pass above all thy works even to thee, but my knowing is too little and may not go so far whiles I live here.*

Much then are thy works; and much more art thou. Full deep are thy thoughts. Thy thoughts are thy privy dooms and thy rightful disposings, unchangeably set in thy wisdom about saving of thy chosen souls and deeming of reproved. No creature may comprehend them; they are so deep hid in thy privy knowing. He that will ransack by his own wit for to know the cause of them shall sink and be drenched,† the water is so deep. Thy privy dooms, Lord, are to be dreaded with love and reverence, not for to

* *Cf. Qui Habitat*, ch. xv, p. 167, above.
† Drowned.

be disputed by man's reason. A meek soul that loveth God goeth all above the water full securely and sinketh not.* He holdeth him paid with all the works of our Lord, and asketh no reason why he doeth so. He seeketh nought else but a clean heart and a free love from the world, and then is all good enough, whatsoever falleth. He is full secure of him that he loveth: that it may not be but well. He dreadeth him not painfully, but trusteth in him securely, and in a meek unknowing of him and of his privy works with love abideth the fulfilling of his will. And for he seeketh nought else but this; therefore our Lord sheweth sometimes to him the knowing of himself and of his works also, when he voucheth safe.

* *Cf.* St Augustine, who writes on this verse as follows: *Revera, fratres mei, nullum mare tam profundum est quam est ista cogitatio Dei, ut mali floreant, et boni laborent : nihil tam profundum, nihil tam altum ; ibi naufragat omnis infidelis, in isto alto, in isto profundo. Vis transire profundum hoc? A ligno Christi noli resilire ; non mergeris : tene te ad Christum.* (*Enarr. in Psalmum* xci 8.)

CHAPTER VI

HOW WISDOM MAY NOT BE FOUNDEN BUT IN A CHASTE LOVER OF GOD

Vir insipiens non cognoscet, et stultus non intelliget haec: "The unwise man shall not know, and the fool shall not understand these."

He is an unwise man that hath much wit in kind and subtlety in reason for to know earthly things, and hath no savour in God nor in ghostly things. But he is a fool that neither hath knowing of earthly things nor of ghostly, but is* as a beast that followeth lusts of his flesh. And, soothly, neither of these two shall know the deep thoughts of our Lord; for pride letteth the unwise man, and fleshly lust letteth the fool. There are some worldly lovers that are wise in their own sight, that spend all their wit and lose it wretchedly in getting of worldly good and of worldly worship. And yet they will intermeddle them irreverently with the privy dooms of God, arguing and disputing, and asking questions that should not be asked. As thus: "Why made God man, since he

* Omitted from MSS.

wist well that he should fall?" Also, "Why saveth God more this man than this man?" Or else such others of predestination of God in chosen souls. They are ready for to ask questions of high matters that pass their wit; but of that they need for amending of their life will they not speak a word. They are unwise; for they have no savour in goodness, nor in the love of God. Covetousness of the world hath so set fast* in the palates of their mouths that they have lost the taste of ghostly food. And yet ween they not so. For they ween and think that they can make many reasons in such manner of questions. And therefore have they great pride in themselves that they can speak thereof. But they are never the nearer. *For wisdom may not be founden in the midst of the sea—that is, in the heart of a wise covetous man in the land of soft living* (that is, in the heart of a living man in the softness of lust)—as Job saith.† But in a meek soul and in a chaste lover of God is wisdom founden; for where true love is, there is wisdom enough. He that loveth God truly asketh neither of God with rising of heart, "Why doest thou so?" It is reason enough to him that God will so have it in all thing that is done; for God is righteousness and

* MS. "engleymed."
† *Job* xxviii 12-14.

goodness, soothfastness, and therefore may he nothing do but righteously and goodly. He asketh nothing but his love: and that giveth he him, and all other good things that he asketh not.

CHAPTER VII

OF THE STRAIT DOOM OF LOVERS OF THE WORLD

AND, soothly, he may understand. Only the lovers of the world, *Cum exorti fuerint peccatores sicut foenum : et apparuerint omnes qui operantur iniquitatem*—"When sinners are sprung out as hay, and all have appeared that work wickedness."

Sinners are called lovers of the world, that are likened to hay. For hay, when it springeth out of the earth, it is first green and fresh, and after it flourisheth fair; but then suddenly it is shorn* and felled down, and drieth with the sun, and so passeth away. Right so, the lovers of the world are fresh and green in their youth, when they give them fully to mirth, and to jollity and liking of this world, and set themselves to divers crafts, and to worldly connings† and to bodily service; not only for to have their bodily sustenance after need (for that were sufferable) but for to come to high estate, to plenty of riches, and to use of fleshly delights, and

* *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 reads "mowen."
† Studying, learning.

for to have the fulfilling of their fleshly will as much as they may.* They have no dread of God nor thinking of heaven; but all their thought and their love is on the world, and on their bodily life, for to keep it tenderly, as though it should ever last. And after this they flourish: and that is when they come to more age† of man's estate, and the world falleth to them more favourably, even fully as they covet. They have their worships and their reverence, riches and other fleshly mirths, and fully delight them therein, and no man dare say nay. But suddenly death cometh, when them were liefest for to live, and are least ware of themselves, and fall down lightly; and then the jollity and liking vanish away. And thus are sinners likened to hay.

"And they have appeared that work wickedness." Not all those that sin work wickedness: for chosen souls that are lovers of God sin oftentimes through frailty and unconning, and yet work they not wickedness, for they have much sorrow and shame in themselves for they do so. But they that live and lust to do sin, and are glad for to do sin‡ wilfully and of purpose, and delight

* *Cf. Qui Habitat*, ch. ii, p. 119, above, and *Bonum Est*, ch. x, pp. 204-5, below.

† MS. "eelde."

‡ *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 reads "Sin and wickedness."

them in malice as good men do in goodness: these men work wickedness. These men appear awhile in this world; for they shew themselves openly in exercise of all wicked works, as much as they dare (save only for dread of man). But it is soon done: they flourish as flowers on the one day, and on the other they wither* and turn into earth again.

But what shall become of these souls? *Ut intereant in seculum seculi; tu autem altissimus in aeternum, domine.* "That they die into the world of worlds." Soothly, Lord, thou Highest of all, without end, this is the end of sinners that work wickedness, as the prophet saith. These souls should die without end. That is, they shall want the liking and the joy of blissful life that is God without end, and aye live in sorrow and pain. They shall die from bliss and ever live in woe, make they never so merry here awhile. This is their ending, unless they amend them before they pass hence, and forsake their wickedness by very repentance, and turn here to their God. This is the vanity of this world and the end of it, that the wise man seeth and forsaketh it soon, that he be not taken therewith. But, soothly, Lord, thou [art the]† Highest without end.

* MS. "welke."

† Omitted from *Lambeth MS* 472.

Lovers of the world high themselves and put down our Lord as much as in them is. For they raise up pride and put down meekness. They lift up falseness and deceivings and sleights, and bear down truth and simplicity and stillness, and raise up striving and chiding [backbiting, swearing, smiting and fighting],* lechery and gluttony, and cast down charity and peace, sobriety and cleanness. They love their own will done in all things, and put down God's will. They set not by his biddings, nor by his menaces. And thus put they God down in all that they may, and make themselves high. But, soothly, Lord, at the last end they shall be cast down, and thou shalt be known as Highest without end. They shall want all their will, and thou shalt have all thy will. They shall nothing will but that they may not have: and that shall be their most pain, for in will is pain most felt, when a man hath not that he would have and hath fully that he would no-wise have. And this will shall aye be alike fresh, without any turning, in reproved souls; and that is skilful.† For‡ they would have all their will fulfilled here wickedly, against the will of God; therefore they shall be put from all their will in endless pain. But, Lord, thou shalt have all thy

* Omitted from *Lambeth MS.* 472.
† Reasonable. ‡ Because.

will here and there, in chosen souls and reproved also. For all shall be as thou wilt, in them and of them, mercifully in them that are thine chosen, and righteously of them that are reproved. And so shalt thou then be known as Highest of all.*

Quoniam ecce inimici tui, domine, quoniam ecce inimici tui peribunt [et dispergentur omnes qui operantur iniquitatem]: † "For why, lo thine enemies, Lord, lo thine enemies shall perish, and they shall be scattered all that work wickedness."

Enemies of our Lord are all fiends, and also all wicked men that live in deadly sin. And therefore he saith twice: "Lo, Lord, thine enemies."‡ For they hate thy soothfastness and thy righteousness. They are unbuxom to thy will, for they love it not. They are full of pride and envy, and of wickedness. But they shall perish without end.

"And all that work wickedness shall be scattered." Lovers of this world that work wickedness, they cleave all together as

* *Cf. Qui Habitat*, ch. viii, pp. 142-3, above.

† Omitted from *Lambeth MS.* 472.

‡ For style *cf. The Cloud of Unknowing*, ch. xx, p. 59: "And how answered he? Surely not only as judge, as he was by Martha appealed: but as an advocate lawfully defended her that loved him, and said: '*Martha, Martha!*' Twice for her good he named her name; for he would that she heard him and took heed to his words."

burrs* do, and are all of one accord for to maintain their wickedness. Each of them beareth up other and comforteth other, through favour of words or of evil ensamples to worldly vanity—as proud men proud, covetous men covetous, lecherous men lecherous† —and so of all others. They conspire together in great unities, and have great fellowship betwixt them, and think it good love; but it is not so, for sin of love and liking of this world is the cause, and none other. And therefore, soothly, they are so fast fastened together‡ now through stinking glue§ of fleshly love‖ that, unless they amend it,‡ at the last end shall they be scattered, and each of them shall hate other full bitterly. They shall gnaw together as fell¶ hounds, and each of them shall put fault upon other; but that helpeth not. They shall be first scattered by the sentence of

* A burr is any rough or prickly seed-vessel, especially the lower head of the burdock, also the small seed-vessel of the goose-grass and other plants; the husk of the chestnut.

† Omitted from *Lambeth MS.* 472, where the punctuation also differs from that in *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397.

‡ Omitted from *Lambeth MS.* 472.

§ Bird-lime.

‖ With this expression *cf.* "the ghostly glue of grace" in *The Epistle of Prayer* (*Cell of Self-Knowledge*, p. 88).

¶ *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 reads "hell."

doom from the flock* of chosen souls; for they shall not be within the fold of heaven. And after they shall be scattered from themselves and none hold with other, in endless pain. And this also is the end of heretics that are God's enemies, that hold so fast together now in maintenance of their errors; they shall then be scattered and none shall help other.†

* *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 reads " book."

† With this chapter *cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xiv, xv and xvi.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW GOD SHALL REWARD HIS LOVER

Et exaltabitur sicut unicornis cornu meum, et senectus mea in misericordia uberi: "And mine horn shall be highed as the unicorn, and mine age in mercy plentiful."

The horn of wicked men is love of the world; the horn of righteous men is the love of God. For the love of God is might and virtue against the fiend and all temptations that may fall. For right as a beast defendeth him with his horn, right so the righteous man defendeth him with the horn of love, and fleeth the fiend, and striketh him through the womb (that is, when he overcometh all fleshly love). But wicked men raise up their horn high against thee; for they put out their fleshly will by the fulfilling of evil works, and shew openly, without dread or shame, how mickle they love the world. Their deeds bear witness outward what their will is within. Scarcely* they spare for any shame to do all that them list. But the horn of righteousness is mickle hid within the skin and little sheweth outward: it is low

* MS. "vnnethhe."

beneath and little known out, for it resteth in the soul. Nevertheless, sometimes it sheweth him forth a little by signs of ghostly works; but that is but little in regard of that that is within. And yet lovers of the world with their proud horns smite oftentimes this horn down again—as when they reprove and scorn good men for their good deeds, and let them all that they may by wicked words and deeds. They are evil paid that other men do well. And yet themselves do sometimes good deeds, not for God but for their own worship. But the prophet saith in the person of the righteous man, "My horn (that is my love) now hid and put down so that it may not be shewed, shall at the last end be highed* as an unicorn in unity and peace. For then shall all horns of worldly lovers be broken down, and the love of the righteous man shall be kept whole and fully be shewed how much it was."

"And mine age and my mercy plentiful." Mine age is my last end, and my last end is my full beginning that never shall have end. And that shall be after this life, when I am oned to God in his bliss. This age and this end shall be to me, as the righteous man saith, in mercy plentiful; for then shall be most plenty of mercy shewed to me. Much love and mercy shewed our Lord to me,

* Exalted.

when he turned my soul from the world and gave to me sorrow and penance for my sins; and much more afterward in gifts of grace and of virtues. But the most is behind yet; for at the last end he shall shew to me the full plenty of his mercy, and that shall be in saving of my soul. I ask no more of his mercy but that my soul be safe and come to his bliss. Less may I not have, and that is enough for me.* But I trust securely that after grace cometh joy; for sithen he beginneth with mercy, he shall end with mercy, not scarcely as a niggard,† but plenteously as a liberal lord, above all measure of my deserts.

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xviii, p. 231: "For they say that it is enough for them to be saved and have the least degree in heaven, they will covet no more."

† MS. "chynche."

CHAPTER IX

HOW WITH MEEK TRUST IN GOD A SOUL SHALL DESPISE HIS GHOSTLY ENEMIES

Et despexit oculus meus inimicos meos, et de insurgentibus in me malignantibus audiet auris mea : "And my eye hath despised mine enemies: and, inrising in me, evil willing mine ear shall hear."

Mine enemies are unclean spirits that hate my soul deadly. But mine eye hath despised them, not appearing to me in bodily likeness but ghostly, seeing their malice and their evil will, and how they may nought do but at the sufferance of God. For there is no creature that hath more malice nor less might than the fiend hath; nevertheless, he that seeth him not ghostly, or else seeth him bodily, is mickle afeared of him. But he that seeth not him bodily, or else seeth him ghostly through light of grace, is nothing afeared of him. The sight of him and of his malice ghostly destroyeth his might and bringeth him to nought.* And not only

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xlv, pp. 391-2: "It is a full fair contemplation of the fiend in a clean soul, when grace bringeth the fiend

mine eyes despise these enemies; but also all other enemies in myself—that are fleshly desires and wicked stirrings. The less that I dread them through meek trust in help of God, the better I escape them. I feel well they touch me without in my sensuality, and trouble the peace of mine heart; but I see well that they sink not in assent of mine heart nor in my will within. They do not away that that may be lost; for *love lasteth aye*, as the apostle saith.* And therefore mine eye despiseth mine ghostly enemies. The more that I dread them, the weaker I am; and the more that I despise them and set them at nought whatso I feel, the mightier I am.

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to the sight of the soul as a clumsy caitiff bound with the might of Jesus that he may not hurt any. Then the soul beholdeth him, not bodily but ghostly, seeing his kind and his malice; and turneth him upside down, and spoileth him and rendeth him all to nought, scorneth him and despiseth him, and setteth naught by his malice. Thus biddeth Holy Writ when it saith thus: *Turn the wicked*, that is the fiend, *upside down, and he shall be as naught*. Much wonder hath the soul that the fiend hath so much malice and so little might. There is no creature so unmighty as he is, and therefore it is a great cowardice that men dread him so much. He may nothing do without leave of our Lord Jesus, not so much as enter into a swine, as the Gospel saith. Much less then may he do to annoy any man."

* 1 *Cor.* xiii 8: *Charitas nunquam excidit.*

But then, " Of inrising in me, evil willing mine ear shall hear." Rising against me with evil will are all unclean spirits and all wicked men, that rise against me and would reave me my life that is the love of God. This is the voice of all righteous men, the which live in the love of God. And therefore mine ear shall hear them (that is, the sentence of damnation, given against them for their wickedness by the mouth of our Lord, sharply smiting them down to endless pain). And so shall I hear and see that mine enemies might nought do against me. For, soothly, they rise not against me, but against him that made me and helpeth me; and therefore they are overcome by their own malice. This is the end of lovers of the world that flourish as hay in this wretched life.

CHAPTER X

HOW A LOVER OF GOD THAT STANDETH STABLY IN THE FAITH OF HOLY CHURCH SHALL COME AFTER THIS LIFE TO THE ENDLESS BLISS OF HEAVEN

BUT what shall befall to the righteous man? Soothly, *Justus ut palma florebit, sicut cedrus libani multiplicabitur:* "The righteous man shall flourish as the palm tree, and he shall be multiplied as the cedar of Lebanon."

The lovers of this world are likened to hay; for they spring, and flourish, and wither away in a short time of this failing life. But the righteous man is likened to a palm tree, and to a cedar of Lebanon that drieth not but standeth over year. The palm is sharp, and rough, and small at the root; but above at the crop it is soft, and mickle spreading abroad with fair flourishing branches, full set with sweet fruit of dates. It is long or it bear fruit; but it beareth aye forth when it hath begun. Right so, the righteous man is sharp and small beneath; for he hath little love or liking in earthly things. He will no more take of them than scantily needeth him. His thought and his desire are no more

fastened in the earth than needeth for to bear up the tree (that is, the body) so that he fall not.* But above, in the love of God and in knowing of ghostly things, he is both high and broad; for he spreadeth his love to all† his even-Christians as fully as to himself. He flourisheth fair by good words and beareth† fruit of good works. And so flourisheth the righteous man by grace here in all virtues; and, therefore, he shall flourish fully, body and soul, in joy of endless bliss, for there shall he be fed with his own fruit in full ripeness for he spared to eat when it was green.‡

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xxxix, p. 345: "And when worldly lovers strive and fight and plead for earthly good, who may first have it, the lover of Jesus striveth with no man, but keepeth himself in peace and holdeth him paid with that that he hath, and will strive for no more; for he thinketh that he needeth no more of all the riches in earth than a scant bodily sustenance to save the bodily life withal, as long as God will: and that he may lightly have. And therefore will he have no more than scantily he needeth for the time, that he may freely be discharged from business about the keeping and the dispending of it, and fully give his heart and his business about the seeking of Jesus, to find him in cleanness of spirit. For that is all his covetousness, for why, only the clean of heart shall see him." *Cf.* also *Qui Habitat*, ch. ii, p. 119, above, and *Bonum Est*, ch. vii, p. 192, above.

† Omitted from *Lambeth MS.* 472.

‡ St Augustine has the following passage on this verse of Psalm xci: *In palma altitudinem significavit.*

"And he shall be multiplied as the cedar of Lebanon." The cedar is a fair tree and an high; it is of sweet smell and never will rot.* Lebanon betokeneth whiteness.† Right so, the righteous man is fair in virtues, high in knowing in contemplation of God,

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Forte et hoc significavit in palma, quia in novissimis suis pulchra est; ut initium eius a terra ducas, finem ipsius in cacumine, ubi habet totam pulchritudinem: aspera radix videtur in terra, pulchra coma sub coelo est. Erit ergo et tua pulchritudo in fine. Radix tua fixa sit; sed sursum versus habemus radicem nostram. Radix enim nostra Christus est, qui ascendit in coelum. Humiliatus exaltabitur." (*Enarr. in Psalmum* xci 15.) The simile of a tree is used in a different sense in *The Epistle of Prayer* (*Cell of Self-Knowledge*, p. 83), as follows: "All this manner of working beforesaid of this reverent affection, when it is brought in by these two thoughts of dread and of hope coming before, may well be likened to a tree that were full of fruit; of the which tree, dread is that party that is within in the earth, that is, the root. And hope is that party that is above the earth, that is, the body with the boughs. In that that hope is certain and stable, it is the body; in that it stirreth men to works of love, it is the boughs; but this reverent affection is evermore the fruit, and then, evermore as long as the fruit is fastened to the tree, it hath in party a green smell of the tree; but when it hath been a certain time departed from the tree and is full ripe, then it hath lost all the taste of the tree, and is king's meat that was before but knave's meat."

* *Cf. Mixed Life*, ch. v, pp. 18-19, footnote *, lines 29-30, above.

† *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 reads "worthiness."

giving sweet odour to other men of wise words and holy works, incorruptible, and aye lasting in the love of God. And he waxeth in Lebanon (that is, in Holy Church; for *Holy Church is white in grace, without spot or wrinkle,* as the apostle saith).* So is the righteous man white in cleanness of soul, and therefore shall he have a white stole† of undeadliness in the high Lebanon that is the bliss of heaven.‡ "And he shall be multiplied as the cedar." For many shall spring§ up by his teaching and good ensample giving, as small branches spring up of the root of the cedar and multiply themselves.

And this is not of one righteous man, but of many. And therefore saith the prophet after of many righteous men thus: *Plantati in domo domini,* [*in atriis domus domini dei*]‖

* *Eph.* v 27. † A long robe.

‡ *Cf. The Scale of Perfection,* Bk. II, ch. iv, p. 186: "And also the body of man shall then be glorified, for it shall receive fully the rich dowry of undeadliness with all that belongeth thereto." *Cf.* also *The Cloud of Unknowing,* ch. lix, p. 142: "And if thou say aught touching the ascension of our Lord, that it was done bodily and for a bodily meaning as well as for a ghostly, because he ascended both very God and very Man: to this will I answer thee, that he had been dead, and then was clad with undeadliness, and so shall we be at the Day of Doom."

§ *Lambeth MS.* 472 reads "he bring."

‖ *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 reads *in atriis domini dei.*

florebunt : "Planted in the house of our Lord they shall flourish: in halls of the house of our Lord God."

The house of our Lord is Holy Church, and it may be called a winter hall; for it is ordained for pilgrims travailing in this life, and saveth righteous men from cold of wickedness. But the high house of our Lord God is the bliss of heaven, and it may be called a summer hall where men shall rest them easily in the heat of the blessed love. And then thine righteous men that are planted in Holy Church through stable troth, without errors and heresies or false fantasies, and are quickened and rooted fast in love and charity, not blinded with covetousness of this world nor with other fleshly sins, and live under the sacraments of Holy Church with meekness and patience, and by virtue of sacraments keep them from cold of the fiend all this time of winter; soothly, they shall flourish in the high summer hall of our Lord.* For troth shall fully be turned into light of knowing without veil of murkness,† and love of God shall fully be felt without meddling of any other affection.

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. xxi, p. 36: "The second thing which it behoveth thee to have, is sure troth in all the articles of the faith, and in the sacraments of Holy Church, trowing them steadfastly with all thy will in thy heart."

† *Cf. Qui Habitat*, ch. xv, p. 167, above.

And then shall all figures of sacraments cease, for soothfastness shall openly be seen. And so shall they flourish in joy and in bliss lastingly. He that is not planted in the winter hall that is Holy Church, for default of troth (as are paynims, Jews and heretics), or else, if he be planted by troth in it, nevertheless, he is not quickened for default that he hath not charity (as are all the lovers of the world that trow unshapely* in God and Holy Church and live in deadly sin): they shall not flourish in the summer hall that is the bliss of heaven.† Many righteous men herebefore have been planted by troth and rooted fast in charity in the house of Holy Church (as the apostles, martyrs, confessors and holy virgins, and all other righteous men without number) through the grace of God, that flourish now in the high church‡ of heaven.

And yet is not all done. For why, *Adhuc multiplicabuntur in senecta uberi, et bene patientes erunt ut annuntient:* "Yet shall they be multiplied in plenteous age, and well suffering shall they be, so that they may shew." The age of Holy Church is the last end of this world, and that end shall be

* Unsuitably.

† *Cf. The Scale of Perfection,* Bk. II, ch. iii, and *Benedictus,* pp. 219-20, below.

‡ *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397 reads "bliss."

plenteous; for yet shall chosen souls be multiplied in the age of Holy Church by fullness of gifts of grace, as plenteously as they were in the beginning. For grace of God was never better cheap than it shall be yet; and that is not for the worthiness of men's deserts, but for the endless goodness of God. For, as men weaken for frailty of themselves, right so more freelier falleth grace to them where our Lord voucheth safe. Holy Church began with martyrs and so it shall end, and that plenteously. For charity shall abound in them that shall then be martyrs more than it was in others before, for it shall be more needed. This shall fall in time of the last persecution, as holy doctors say. But, nevertheless, ere that time come grace shall not die; but it shall multiply privily in men's hearts and kindle the desires of them through burning love, and make souls ready and greedy against the time come. It shall draw suddenly chosen souls from all the love of the world to the service of God. "And then shall they be well suffering, so that they may shew." That is, they shall be made mighty in troth and burning in love so fully that they shall trust for to die so that they might see God. And so shall they patiently and gladly suffer bodily death for the love of him that they most covet, and then may they shew the great

mercy of God done specially to them before all other souls.*

* *Cf. The Epistle of Privy Counsel*, ch. vi, p. 206: "For since, in the first beginning of Holy Church, in time of persecution, divers souls and many were so marvellously touched in suddenness of grace that suddenly, without means of other works coming before, men of crafts did cast down their instruments from their hands, and children their tables in the school, and did run without ransacking of reason to the martyrdom with saints: why shall not men trow now, in the time of peace, that God may, can, and will, and doth—yea, toucheth divers souls as suddenly with the grace of contemplation. And this I trow he will do full graciously in chosen souls. For he will worthily be known in the end, to the wondering of all the world."

CHAPTER XI

OF THE SOVEREIGN GOODNESS OF GOD

AND they shall shew also *Quoniam rectus dominus deus noster, et non est iniquitas in eo:* "That rightful is our Lord God, and no wickedness is in him." Rightful seemeth our Lord to all those that are rightful in their own hearts, and to a froward heart our Lord seemeth unrightful. He hath a right heart that hateth sin and crooketh not to the love of the world, nor is not scattered in vanities of bodily wits with lust; but is drawn up from the love of the world to all manner of goodness, and hath aye a ghostly beholding of God with reverent love,* aye seeking and desiring the privy presence of him in cleanness of heart and gladness of spirit. Rightful is God in his sight, for his will is conformed to God's will, and there is no great strife betwixt them. He holdeth him paid with whatso God doeth, and falleth down meekly in his thought to his will, and thinketh it all rightful and well done; for there is no wickedness in him. God is not only good, but he is sovereign goodness, and wickedness

* *Cf. Qui Habitat*, ch. x, p. 149, above.

is contrary to goodness, and therefore there is no wickedness in him. He is good in himself, and he is good in his creatures and in his works. There is no wanting of goodness in him, for he is full good in his own kind, not taking part of another thing. And therefore there is in him no wickedness; but he is good in all good and sovereign goodness.* Amen.†

* *Cf. Qui Habitat, cf.* xiii, pp. 160-1, and ch. xv, p. 167, above.

† Inserted from *B. M. Harl. MS.* 2397.

V

BENEDICTUS

BENEDICTUS

BENEDICTUS dominus deus Israel, quia visitavit et fecit redemptionem plebis suae: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and made the buying of his folk."* The holy man Zacharias, father of St John, forasmuch as he trowed not to the Angel Gabriel that Elizabeth his wife should be able to conceive and bear, because she was old and barren—he lost his speech and was made dumb unto the time that the child was born. Nevertheless, in time of his silence he was inspired of the Holy Ghost for to know the privity of the incarnation, the passion and the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ that was coming, and also the office and the worthiness of this child St John. And, therefore, when St John was born, his tongue was opened, and as soon he, forgetting his silence, brake out into a voice of praise† by manner of prophecy, and spake forth with great gladness of spirit that he had learned in time of his silence, saying thus, Blessed be thou, Lord, God of Israel, maker of all

* *Luc.* i 68. † MS. "loonynge."

creatures, that are chosen souls (to the which only he is God, for they see him by troth and love him by desire; to wicked men and to devils he is Lord, but he is not their God, for they love him not). "For he hath visited." That is, he, in person of the Son, hath meeked himself from the highness of his majesty to the lowness of mankind that lay in mischief and in sickness, taking upon himself flesh and blood of the glorious Virgin Mary for health of man's soul. "And he made their buying." That is, he suffered wilfully of burning love the passion of death upon the cross, and gave his precious heart's blood for the price of buying of man that sold himself to the devil in paradise for a penny of passing lust. "Of his folk," that are only his chosen. For, if it be so that the precious passion sufficeth in worthiness of itself unto all reasonable creatures that had need of it, nevertheless, the fruit nor the profit have none but they that trow in him and love him, the which are soothfastly the folk of our Lord.*

Et erexit cornu salutis nobis in domo David pueri sui: "And he raised the horn of health to us in the house of David his child."

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection,* Bk. II, ch. xxxiv, pp. 320-1: "For he died for all souls alike and bought them, if their will have the perfect love of it. And also it sufficeth for the buying of all, though it be so that all have it not."

That is, he raised up his body upon the third day from the fleshly death, glorious and unsufferable of pain, as horn. For right as a horn waxeth above the flesh, and passeth all the tenderness of it, and turneth into hardness unfeelable; right so the body of our Lord, when it was raised by the might of the Godhead, waxed above all the fleshly feeling of deadlihead and of all sufferableness painful, and it is turned into a blissful hardness, so that it might thole* no pain. This horn (that is, this Man that he glorified) is to us all health† and salvation. For this blessed horn is full oil of the Godhead, out of the which horn cometh down to us that are yet fleshly part of that oil of grace, and anointeth our souls and healeth us from all sickness.‡ For right as we are called Christians of Christ, right so of Christ are we all anointed in part; and that if we be in the house of David his child (that is, in Holy Church). For, unless we hold us meekly in the troth of Holy Church and keep us in peace and in unity, soothly, of this oil of grace that cometh out of the horn get we no part. For Christ is head of Holy Church, and therefore he departeth not the oil of

* Suffer.

† *Cf. Qui Habitat*, ch. xv, p. 166, above, and *Benedictus*, p. 230, below.

‡ *Cf. Eight Chapters on Perfection*, ch. iv, p. 97, above.

grace but to his members, the which are fastened to his ghostly body by troth, hope and charity.* This Holy Church is the house, not of fleshly David the son of Isai, but it is the house of ghostly David—and strong against the devil of hell—the Son of Virgin Mary.

Sicut locutus est per os sanctorum, qui† *a saeculo sunt, prophetarum eius:* "As he hath spoken of by the mouth of his holy prophets, the which are from the world." That is, he hath fulfilled now as he hath spoken before by the mouths of his prophets. The which, as it were all with one mouth, prophesied the incarnation, the passion and the resurrection of our Lord Jesu Christ; for all had they one spirit, through whose inspiration they prophesied the privity of our Lord's incarnation. "The which are from the world." That is, the which were from the beginning of the world unto the time that he was born. The which, either by deeds in figure (as Abel, Noe, Isaac and Joseph) or by words (as Isai, Jeromye and other prophets) betokened to us this incarnation, the sovereign working that our Lord wrought in his manhood for salvation of us.‡

* *Cf. Bonum Est*, ch. x, p. 209, above.

† MS. reads *que*.

‡ *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. iii, p. 182: "For right as all chosen souls that were before the Incarnation under the Old Testament had troth in

[*Salutem ex inimicis nostris, et de manu omnium qui oderunt nos:* "Help from our enemies and from the hand of all that hated us." That is, he spake by his prophets, promising us health from our enemies, that are all fleshly desires and all worldly dreads; for these are our next enemies and most harm us. They make our souls so feeble and so sick, that we neither have inly savour of the love of God nor ghostly might to think upon him, unto the time that we are made whole* by the oil of grace of our sickness. "And from the hand of all that hated us." That is, from the power of unclean spirits, that are devils that enviously hate us, and would let us from the bliss they may not have nor will not; that they shall not be able to bring us into deadly sin through mastery nor through grievousness of temptation here, nor they shall not torment us after this

Christ, that he should come and reform man's soul, either openly as patriarchs and prophets and other holy men had, or else privily and generally as children and other simple and imperfect souls had that knew not specially the privity of the Incarnation; right so all chosen souls under the New Testament have troth in Christ that he is come, either openly and feelingly as ghostly men and wise men have, or else generally as children have that die christened, and other simple and lewd souls that are nourished in the bosom of Holy Church."

* MS. "hooli."

life endlessly for our trespass, in the murk prison of hell. If we may keep us through grace from our next enemies that come out of ourselves (as from all wicked stirrings, unclean thoughts, fleshly desires), or else, if we be suddenly hurt by them, that we suffer them not to rot nor stink in us wilfully, but readily seek medicine of contrition and compunction,* soothly, outward enemies, that are devils of hell, shall neither by sleights nor by mastery harm us in our souls; for our Lord hath by his prophets behight† us help and health against our enemies.

And not only that; but also he behight *Ad faciendam misericordiam cum patribus nostris, et memorari testamenti sui sancti:* "For to do mercy with our fathers, and for to mind of his holy testament." That is, our forefathers that were before the incarnation and trowed in Christ's coming (as we trow now in him that he is come) and died in that troth, they passed not as soon to heaven; but they were put in darkness of hell without feeling of other pain for the original sin, unto that time that our Lord had shewed his mercy to mankind when he suffered death upon the cross. Then, whiles his body lay in the grave, his soul, oned with the Godhead, went down into hell for to do his mercy with

* *Cf. Qui Habitat*, ch. xi, p. 155, above.
† Promised.

our fathers as he behight them, and took out Adam and Eve and all other souls from the darkness of hell, and brought them into the brightness of ghostly light, and opened to them the gates of heaven through his endless mercy. And so had he mind of his holy testament. That is, he had mind to fulfil the covenant that he made with our forefathers—as with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob—to the which he behight that he should bring them and all their children into the land of behest* that runneth milk and honey. The which covenant was ghostly and soothfastly fulfilled with them, when he brought them out from the prison of the devil and from the darkness of hell into the land of life—that is, the bliss of heaven, the which runneth for the filling of them plenteously both milk (that is, joy of the glorious, blessed manhood of our Lord Jesu) and honey (that is, joy of his blessed Godhead).†

And not only did he that mercy to them, but also *Iusiurandum quod iuravit ad habraham patrem nostrum, daturum se nobis:* "The oath that he swore to Abraham our father for to give it to us." The oath that he swore to Abraham was the unchangeable disposing that he had made with Abraham, when that he gave to him and to his seed the land of

* Promise.

† *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. i and ii.

behest, and how that he would bring his seed that come of him to that land. The which disposing he fulfilled, not only bodily with all the fleshly children of Abraham, when he brought them into the Holy Land, but also he shall fulfil it ghostly with us all that are the sons of Abraham in following of truth. For, as Abraham trowed to the behest of our Lord, and by that was he made rightful; right so, if we soothfastly trow in our Lord, we are then rightful and ghostly sons of Abraham, to the which he promised the land of behest. And, therefore, as he disposed so shall it be done, and bring us into the land of peace (that is, the bliss of heaven).*

And also whiles we live here *Ut sine timore, de manu inimicorum nostrorum liberati, serviamus illi:* "That, without dread, from the hand of our enemies delivered, we may serve him." That is, that we may be delivered by virtue of the passion of our Lord Jesu Christ from the hands of our enemies—that is, from thraldom of deadly sins, and from the painful prison of hell, and from the

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. I, ch. xlv, p. 86: "For our Lord behight the children of Israel when he led them into the land of behest, and in figure of them all Christian men thus: *As much land as thou mayest tread upon with thy foot* of very desire, *so much here shalt thou have in the land of behest*, that is in the bliss of heaven when thou comest thither."

malicious tyranny of the devil. "We may serve him without dread." That is, that we, now seeing the endless mercy and goodness of God shewed to us, shall freely and gladly serve the fulfilling of his law—not with painful bitterness only for pain of hell, but for pain of virtue and desire of righteousness, meddled with a reverential dread—that we be not departed from him through our own default. This dread is good, for it keepeth us in charity; but that other painful dread—as when a man leaveth sin and would sin, were it only for the pains of hell—standeth not in charity. It may bring in charity; but *when charity is brought in, then is this dread cast out.** This freedom have we now by grace through virtue of his precious passion: that we may serve our Lord freely and lovingly in part here living, and fully reign with him in the bliss of heaven. And this service shall not be in bodily sacrifice as was in the old law, nor it lieth not in bodily reverence principally, but it shall be ghostly.

In sanctitate et iustitia coram ipso omnibus diebus nostris: "In holiness and in righteousness before him in all our days." That is,

* *Cf.* 1 *Joan.* iv 18: *Timor non est in charitate; sed perfecta charitas foras mittit timorem, quoniam timor poenam habet; qui autem timet, non est perfectus in charitate.*

our service shall be to our Lord in holiness: that is, in ordained love to his even-Christian. For he is holy that loveth God over all things, and he is righteous that loveth his even-Christian as himself. Or else "in holiness." That is, in cleanness of spirit, in deep thinking and subtle feeling of God, and by burning affections to him—as falleth specially to men that are active. These deeds are meedful and profitable if they be done before God (that is, principally for love of God and of their even-Christian); not for vainglory, nor for none other worldly profit, for then have they no meed. For they are hypocrites that do many good deeds but they do them behind God, not before him, inasmuch as they seek not joy in God, but sounding and praising and wondering of the world, and buy joy in themselves. We shall not do so. We shall in all our service, inward and outward, seek for to feel and find joy in God; and that not in one hour or on one day only, but in all our days. That is, in all our days here, that we might freely and gloriously dwell with him in the bliss of heaven without end.*

Et tu, puer, propheta altissimi vocaberis: praeibis enim ante faciem domini parare vias eius: "And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet

* *Cf. Qui Habitat*, ch. vi, pp. 133-5, above, and *Bonum Est*, ch. i, pp. 173-4, above.

of the Highest. Thou shalt go before the face of our Lord for to make ready his ways." This holy man Zacharias prophesied of the manhood of our Lord that was coming, and that by words of time that is passed, as if it had become, for this skill: for, right as a thing that is done and passed may not be undone, right so the incarnation of our Lord's coming was so secure to his sight that, standing the behest of God, it must not be undone. And, therefore, he prophesied of it and of the salvation of man's soul that was commanded, as it had been done. And then, when he had thus prophesied of our Lord and of his working, he turned his word to his son St John, and he said to him thus: "And thou, child, that wert hallowed by the grace of the Holy Ghost in thy mother's womb, and privileged that thou shouldest never sin deadly, thou shalt be called the prophet of the Highest." That was sooth; for he said to the Jews that after him should come one that was before him, that should baptise him in the Holy Ghost, and that was our Lord Jesu Christ. And he was also more than a prophet; for him that others prophesied as coming, he marked him with his finger, shewing that he was come, saying thus: *Lo, the Lamb of God.** "Thou shalt go before the face of our Lord." That

* *Joan.* i 29 and 36.

is, thou shalt, as a wise man, purveyor,* go before the presence of our Lord and make ready his ways (that is, men's souls, the which, if they be clean, are the ways of our Lord). Thou shalt by thy preaching stir them to repentance, and then shalt thou baptise them in water, so that they might afterward be ready and able for to be baptised in the Holy Ghost. This shalt thou do; for thou art the lantern of Christ, friend of the spouse, crier† before the high justice, beadle‡ before the heavenly Master, and prophet of the Highest sent specially before.

Ad dandam scientiam salutis plebi eius, in remissionem peccatorum eorum: "For to give knowing of health to his folk in forgiveness of their sins." "For to give knowing of health." That is, for to teach and preach to his folk that the health of their souls standeth neither in fleshly sacrifice of the old law, nor in outward deeds of righteousness, nor in bodily penance; but that it standeth in steadfast troth in Christ and in his passion, through merit and virtue of which passion we that are his folk, by seeking, shall have forgiveness of our sins and health of

* A domestic officer who made purveyance of necessaries, lodging, transport and the like for the sovereign, or for some other great personage.

† An officer in a court of justice who makes the public announcements, acts as preserver of order, etc.

‡ A herald.

our souls. And therefore St John first, when he preached to the folk, said only thus: *Forthink ye you of your sins; for the kingdom of heaven nigheth.** That is, our Lord Jesu, which is king and kingdom to all his chosen souls; and ye shall have forgiveness of your sins.

Per viscera misericordiae dei nostri, in quibus visitavit nos oriens ex alto: "By sides† of mercy of our Lord God, in the which he hath visited us, springing out from the high." "By sides of mercy." That is, by manhood of our Lord Jesu, the which he took of the blessed maiden Mary. And in his manhood he shewed unto us his mercy openly that before was privy and hid from us. For before that time our Lord shewed to mankind mickle of his hard righteousness; but in taking of our kind and suffering of his passion he shewed unto us the plenty of his goodness and the micklehead‡ of his mercy. "In the which Manhood he springed from the high." That is, our Lord Jesu, the second Person in the Trinity, that sprung of the high (that is, of his Father without beginning) by an unspeakable generation hath visited us. And that was when he became Son of Mary. And when that he was unseeable in

* *Matt.* iii 2.
† Used with reference to generation or birth.
‡ Greatness.

his own kind, endlessly he would be seen and felt in kind of man. Thus visited our Lord us as a good leech visiteth a sick man. He lowed him down to us, and touched our sores with the finger of his mercy, and healed us of our sickness bodily and ghostly.* For that was the cause of his coming down: for to make us whole of our sins, and for to raise us up unto him.

And also, *Illuminare his qui in tenebris et in umbra mortis sedent, ad dirigendos pedes nostros in viam pacis:* "For to lighten them that sit in darkness and in shadow of death: for to righten our feet into the way of peace." "For to lighten." That is, for to give light and grace by his preaching and by his holy living to them that sit in darkness. That was all mankind, that before his coming sat in darkness of sin and in the shadow of death (that is, in the corruption and wretchedness of this life). For death properly is nought else but a full departing from the blessed life (that is, God) without hope of again coming thereto.† In this death sit

* *Cf. The Scale of Perfection*, Bk. II, ch. xx, p. 238: "our Lord himself Jesus is special master of this craft, and he is special leech of ghostly sickness for without him all is naught"; *Qui Habitat*, ch. xv, p. 166, and *Benedictus*, p. 219, above.

† For style *cf. Mixed Life*, ch. xiv, p. 46, above: "For love properly is a full coupling of the lover and the loved together, as God and a soul into one."

all devils and all damned souls, that bitterly and fully are departed from the joy of heaven without hope of recure.* For these shall never feel the light of grace through which they should have soothfast repentance, nor the light of joy in the bliss of heaven. But shadow of death is the blindness and the wretchedness of this bodily life, by the which we are departed from the blessed life and from the clear sight of heavenly joy which we were made in, because of our first sin, except only an hope by grace of our Lord for to recover it and come again thereto; and therefore it is not properly death, but it is a shadow like unto it. Unto these only he came, for to give light of grace for to know soothfastness of good living and for to fulfil it in working: and, after this light of grace, also for to give us the light of joy when we are passed out of this shadow of death; the which light should we never have seen, if he had not meeked him down to us in his manhood for to lighten our reason in knowing of him. And also, "For to right our feet." That is, for to rule our affections† and kindle our wills with the fire of the Holy Ghost only for to desire the way of peace—that is, himself; for *he is the way* in the

* Recovery, remedy, succour, cure.

† *Cf. Eight Chapters on Perfection*, ch. vii, p. 104, footnote ||, above.

which we shall go without falling, and *he is soothfastness* by the which we shall go without straying,* and *he is that blessed life* and stead† of peace in the which we shall [no doubt]‡ rest without ending.§ Amen.

* MS. "willynge." † Place.

‡ MS. "drede." Possibly the reading should be "no drede."

§ *Joan.* xiv 6. *Cf. The Scale of Perfection,* Bk. II, ch. xxxiii, p. 312: "What is heaven to a reasonable soul? Soothly naught else but Jesus God."

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HILTON, WALTER

AUTHOR

Minor Works of Walter Hilton.

TITLE

Edited by Dorothy Jon

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